University of Alberta

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE INQUIRY: MY HOPE AS AN EDUCATOR

By

LENORA M. LeMAY ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Education

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Lenora M. LeMay

Lenora M. LeMay
2 Elk Point
St. Albert, Alberta T8N 6V5

Date: July 18, 2002

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "An Autobiographical Narrative Inquiry: My Hope as an Educator" submitted by Lenora M. LeMay in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Jean Clandinin

Dr. Jean Clandinin

Ronna Jevne

Dr. Ronna Jevne

Brenda Munro

Dr. Brenda Munro

Date: July 4, 2002

Abstract

Traditionally, much of the Professional Development teachers have been involved in has been identified as theory to practice. In this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I tell the story of introducing a competing professional development story on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Competing stories are those types of professional development activities that encourage teachers to be more in control of their own professional development, by relying less on experts and more on the knowledge gained from reflecting on their experiences in classrooms and school settings using theoretical sources. I explore why I felt so compelled to implement a competing story on the professional knowledge landscape using narrative inquiry as my research method. In the process of this inquiry I began to understand my hope on the professional knowledge landscape. Photography also helped me to understand what challenged and sustained my hope on the professional knowledge landscape. Several themes revealed themselves as I told my story in four distinct notebooks.

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Prologue

Narrative is the spark that illuminates our professional lives.
(Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, p. 50)

I am the first one here today--the first time I have a moment to catch my breath between the rush of leaving school at 3:35 p.m., driving to the University, rushing to class, and finally sinking into this soft chair around the empty table. The quiet catches me off guard at first. The noisy confusion from school slowly subsides as I begin to settle into my place around the table. This reminds me of a time 20 years or so ago in a different place, but not a different space. I feel the same anticipation. Sinking further into my chair, I remember living in the Social Studies 30 class in 1975.

The sun peeks through the slats of the partially closed blinds, winking at me as I enter the quiet classroom. The setting sun reminds me this is the last class of the day. I can feel my energy level increasing as I wander forward to the lively debate that will surely unfold as it does in every Social Studies 30 class. I can see Mr. Bently sitting on the edge of his desk top, arms resting comfortably on his knees, leaning forward, engaged in challenging each and everyone of us. I can hear, too, the lively staccato of student voices, more animated with

> each comment, as an increasing number of students find themselves drawn into the debate. The ebb and flow of the conversation is what I find energizing. During the ebb, we each have a chance to personally reflect for a moment or two. There are no right or wrong answers in this class which means we can retreat within for moments of quiet reflection to hear and experience a voice so often ignored. When that voice surfaces we know it is not only okay to give it life, but an expectation that we will in order to make sense of what we know (Remembered Story, March 2, 1998).

Two very different times and places and yet the same space, 20 years apart. A time and place where my voice, along with all the other voices present, is encouraged to participate in arriving at a different place of knowing. The anticipation is what I remember most in both these stories – the anticipation of coming to know through a mingling of voices, but most important the respect of my own voice being heard in the mingling called dialogue. No one voice holding power over another. Possibilities and wonders mingling into different meanings for each around the table and in the individual desks scattered throughout the classroom in both times and places. The feeling of empowerment as my anticipation becomes reality. The sense of knowing that I can move forward with a greater sense of who I am becoming as my own voice grows stronger and more succinct with increasing understanding about who I am in relation to others.

Setting the Stage

In 1998, I was a Grade 5/6 teacher in an urban elementary school. I was a member, representing my school, of a steering committee charged with planning a joint professional development day among 13 elementary schools. In January of that same year, I also enrolled in my first graduate studies class and formally applied to work on my Master's degree. Not long after, I found myself presenting a proposal to 13 administrators involved in the joint professional development project.

I received permission from my principal to leave my classroom half an hour before dismissal that day, to rush over to the meeting. I remember simultaneously handing out copies of my proposal and thinking I was either brave and/or crazy. "No time to think. Just read," I told myself. The following is the introduction of what I presented.

Those who know me know me as a person with a strong conviction and belief in personal and professional development. I remember the excitement I felt at the first planning session where teachers would be encouraged to network with each other. I knew in an instant where I wanted to expend my energy as a planning member. My feelings toward this initiative have not changed. It is for this reason that I have asked to address you today (Journal Entry, February 20, 1998).

I could end this story with "and the rest is history," but that would not capture my narrative of experience. It was the beginning of a journey, examining why I became a teacher, what I expected from teaching, and how I saw myself as a teacher in the future. A better description would be "things were never the same again." Things were never the same again because on that day and on nearly every day after that, I began to ask myself why I needed to implement teacher networking.

Secondary questions began to inform how I established my research. Would I receive permission to create teacher networks? If the principals agreed to implement teacher networking, would teachers participate willingly in professional development where their teaching experiences were valued? How would teacher networking encourage teachers to use their voices more often in influencing decisions in education? How would implementing and participating in teacher networking inform and change my own teaching experiences? Would teacher networking replicate past experiences with my mom and family where I was encouraged to dialogue to create knowledge?

An entry from my journal 20 minutes after the presentation exemplifies the kinds of reflections I made on my actions as an educator. From that day forward my journal entries began to reflect my wonders about teacher networking in its many forms.

What was I thinking? Obviously, I wasn't. The looks on their faces said many different things. I know one of the issues was time. I was the last on their agenda and they have been meeting all afternoon. I also know they were wondering what I was up to this time, because, although I have not taken on a project like this before, I have been known to speak my mind. Will they think that teacher networking is a waste of time and send me packing? Will they tell me I have no business wasting their time and they will decide what teachers do for professional development? Will they tell me I had better get back to reality and quit dreaming like I was told in my third year of teaching by the teachers at my new school (Journal Entry, February 20, 1998)?

This event occurred after 18 years in the classroom in three different schools. During these 18 years, I witnessed numerous changes in education and adapted those changes to my classroom practices, but not without reflections about what those changes would mean to lives both inside and outside the classroom. Those reflections often caused me to ask further questions. Often my questions were too complicated for others so I often retreated to the solitude of my journal. The comment I heard repeatedly, in my professional and personal life was, "You think too much. Life's not that complicated." My stories often caused discomfort because there were no quick and easy solutions. The paradigmatic and scientific knowledge (Bruner, 1985) offered by experts outside classrooms did not allow for living within the messiness of the nuances and ambiguities of the stories that prompted my questions. My many journals over 18 years contain many stories, wonders, frustrations, and celebrations that tell of my knowing about being a teacher both inside and outside the classroom. Now it is time to move outside those journal entries to tell my story to a larger audience so I can understand why I felt compelled to implement teacher networking at this time in my teaching career.

Carter (1993) describes how important telling stories is to understanding or creating knowing when she states:

> Stories seem to resist such singular interpretations and, thus, cannot be subsumed into what Bruner (1985) called paradigmatic knowledge. To elaborate an example Bruner used, paradigmatic or scientific explanation requires consistency and noncontradiction. Story, on the other hand, accommodates ambiguity and dilemma as central figures or themes. (p. 6)

As I think back to my many other stories of being a learner and teacher, I am ready to tell "my story" to come to a better understanding through interpretation, not explanation, of who I am as both a character and narrator of my story (Bruner, 1997). In this thesis, I tell stories of my narratives of experiences looking backward and forward, inward and outward, always situated in relation to a place called school (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The context for the journals, the many stories and conversations told, "in different spaces, places, and times with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships," is what Clandinin and Connelly (1995, p. 4) describe, metaphorically, as the professional knowledge landscape. Clandinin and Connelly further describe the storying and restorying that defines one's identity as an educator, as a developing of personal practical knowledge. Personal practical knowledge "is a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions for the future to deal with exigencies of a present situation" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25).

My personal practical knowledge of who I was and of who I wanted to be as a teacher are represented in the stories that occur in different places, with different people and things in different times on the professional knowledge landscape. My journal entries represent my stories on the professional knowledge landscape. These journal entries and storied memories are like puzzle pieces creating my identity. Reflecting on, unpacking, and arranging these puzzle pieces into an autobiographical narrative will inform why I felt so compelled to implement teacher networking as a competing professional development story.

It is to that competing professional development story that I turn to now. Two very different approaches to professional development exist for educators.

> One approach--deficit training--views teaching as technical work and seeks to improve it by training teachers in a set of techniques and discrete behaviour. This approach has, in fact, been dominant. The other approach

> --growth and practice--defines teachers as professionals, views them as having requisite knowledge to act on behalf of their students, and seeks to develop structures to enable them to collaborate with colleagues and participate in their own renewal and the renewal of schools. Much of the recent policy research supports enablement over prescription and local over central control. (Lieberman & Miller, 1992, p. 1051)

Traditionally, many of the professional development activities for teachers fall into the deficit training or theory as applied to practice model. That is, teachers are expected to learn, from those designated as experts in a particular curricular area, both the desired outcomes and strategies to be implemented in the classroom. The expectation is that teachers, without question, will implement new theory gleaned from the expert into their teaching practices each time they attend an in-service or conference. Typically, teacher research has also honoured the theory to practice professional development. "Research of this kind has been associated with the view of teacher-as-technician (Apple, 1986), wherein the teacher's primary role is to implement the research findings of others concerning instruction, curriculum, and assessment" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, p. 2). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) refer to this view of theory-driven practice as having the quality of a sacred story of teaching.

Crites (1971) defines sacred stories as those that are not so much told as lived within. They are stories that lie deep within the consciences of particular groups of individuals informing their actions. When sacred stories change, they do so unconsciously and often very slowly (p. 296). The way that most educators understand how theory, in the form of policy, relates to practice has the quality of a sacred story.

That is, experts, often not those in classrooms, decide on the policies to be carried out within classrooms by practicing teachers. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) refer to these policies that come to classrooms as the rhetoric of conclusions coming down a metaphoric conduit to practice.

The competing story I envisioned in my proposal to the 13 administrators was one that would encourage teachers to be more in control of their own professional development. To do this they would be relying less on the experts and more on their personal practical knowledge gained from working together in dialogue with experiences in the classrooms and school settings. I wanted to tell and hear classroom stories with other teachers and, in so doing, better understand the decisions we each make and carry out as we make curriculum in classrooms. More importantly, I wanted to create spaces where teacher voices could become strong and eventually heard. I wanted to create safe places where teachers could develop a sense of the important roles we play in choosing and implementing curriculum directives.

Narrative Inquiry

Undertaking a project to implement a competing professional development story, teacher networking, is part of my inquiry. A much larger part is to understand what brought me to this research project, how I participated in its implementation, and what I learned about myself along the way. Being both a journaller and teller of stories means I have ample data to begin a study of my identity. "Our accounts of the past can only be expected to have a degree of consistency if they are written down or are remembered and retold frequently" (Kerby, 1991, p. 30). The day I made the presentation to the administrators was the day I began to collect field texts to begin the formal inquiry into my storied experiences of living on the professional knowledge landscape. That day was the beginning of what I imagined as my inquiry. It emerged as a crystallizing from my narratives of experience as the child of a teacher, a student of education, and a teacher. Past narrative representations helped to construct the self I have come to know as part of my identity, but also who I want to be in the future also informs my identity as I construct it in the present. Crites (1986) discusses how the past creates experiences we recall and claim as identifiers of who we are in the present, but not without an interest in who we are becoming in the future. "The future being unknown, indeed unknowable, the paradoxical result is that self-knowledge like other knowledge, is mobilized in the pursuit of that knowledge" (p. 164). It is precisely this looking backward and seeing forward, the temporality of narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 2000), that began to inform my identity as a teacher as I began to reflect on storied memories and journal entries. I came to narrative inquiry wondering about the past that pushed me forward to search for a place and space where I would be comfortable on the professional knowledge landscape. In this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I also tell of trying to implement teacher networking, creating a text that tells of the experiences I encountered from 1998 - 2000. However, I then return on all of these narratives of experience using the frames of hope and photography to retell my story with new insight.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) define narrative inquiry as "the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future" (p. 21). Their work provides the structure I am undertaking to understand my hope as an educator. The three-dimensional space Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use in narrative inquiry is created with dimensions of the personal and social, past, present, and future and a sense of place (p. 50). These three dimensions are included in the story, the sometimes restorying, and in the later interpretations I make of the story to discern who I am in relation to my hope.

From Process to Structure

An entry from my personal/professional journal, referred to as my journal, represents an example of how I used my journal to come to know what conditions I needed in order to grow personally and professionally.

In an April 2001 entry I wrote,

Personal practical knowledge is found in a teacher's practice.

Juxtaposing hope and personal practical knowledge provided one of those "aha" moments. Spending the last year and a half writing the story of "My Hope as an Educator Through Teacher Networking" in its many different forms, I was sometimes unsure about the connection and yet tacitly knew I had to write to understand. Richardson (1994) explains what I discovered through my writing when she wrote, "I consider writing as a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic" (p. 516).

Through writing, rewriting, and reflecting, I often wondered how I could have lost hope and what was wrong with me as a teacher. I wondered why I could not stay in the classroom and fight for what I believed in. It was during one of my ongoing rewritings of identity issues that the insight occurred. Now it seems so obvious. I had to live and relive the major events that shaped who I am as a person and a professional many times before I came to recognize the intense relationship between personal professional development *and hope. In addition to my inability at making reflection a possibility for myself with others through teacher networking opportunities, I had fewer and fewer opportunities to reflect on my practice independently. Personally, I was living a life that was not congruent by working in an environment where my voice was not being heard.*

When I started this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I did not know that I would find myself examining my own voice and hope. My original intention was to examine a competing story of professional development. In other words, I wanted to study teachers' voice through teacher networking. My chosen method of inquiry, narrative inquiry, was to provide a running account of events that transpired during my attempts to introduce and implement teacher networking within 13 schools. My stories of my distant past began to spill out and to reflect into my place as an educator in the future. Before long, my writing turned toward personal experiences as opposed to the general experiences of the teachers involved. I began to question my hopes, frustrations, and ways of knowing instead of simply recording the happenings as I implemented teacher networking.

Perhaps what I did through the process of writing and rewriting was what Richardson (1994) hoped to promote when she encouraged writers to develop a voice to get their messages into mainstream social science (p. 523). I wanted to encourage, through writing, the development of a particular way of knowing from which to speak, instead of being spoken to (Journal Entry, April 12, 2001).

Coming to know about my need to implement teacher networking through rereading the journal entries and discussing with Dr. Clandinin, my advisor, how my journal entries evolved and arranged themselves in patterns prompted me to re-present my research work in a notebook format (McCormick Calkins, 1991). Asking myself questions around the patterns helped me find the meaning of what I was exploring through my journal entries. McCormick Calkins' statement "one of the ways to learn from your writing is to pay attention to the surprising, troubling parts" (p. 68) drew my attention to four different phases in my research. Through the process of becoming more aware of the importance of my hope in my search to understand my need to implement teacher networking, I later discovered the benefits of using photography in my search to understand more deeply why I needed to implement teacher networking. My research is divided into four distinct phases. These four phases, or notebooks, represent the story of my developing personal practical knowledge, but also the way in which I looked at, and into, my research along the way in developing my personal practical knowledge. The first notebook is about coming to the inquiry, the second is living the inquiry in its early stages. The third notebook is about the experience of hope. The fourth, photography, was a going inside to come to understand my identity as an educator needing to create knowledge through dialogue with other educators. In each notebook I use three fonts. I write remembered stories (written in 'Courier New' font) and *journal entries from as far back as 1982 (written in 'Times New Roman Italics' font).* Reflections on remembered stories and journal entries are written in Times New Roman (regular) font.

Writing to Know

Teachers' lives, much like women's lives, have not been written in all possible forms (Heilbrun, 1988). As I wrote this research text, I often commented how I was writing myself out of a career because my writing was not always positive. Teachers have not been encouraged to speak or write about their experiences and certainly not about their negative experiences. Teachers, much like the women Heilbrun wrote about, do not have previous stories of the trials and tribulations of being a teacher. "Women writing of their own lives have found it no easier to detach themselves from the bonds of womanly attitudes" (p. 22). This sentence resonated throughout my thinking during the whole of my work. I was constantly reminded, from within, about teacher attitudes. As a teacher, I should not have been having the thoughts I was. I was a bad teacher for not fitting in, for not complying with the sacred story, and for unveiling some of the cover stories being told on the educational landscape. Not only was I a bad teacher, I was telling the world I was a bad teacher. I kept searching for other theses that revealed other "bad teachers" so I would not be the only one. I was being disloyal on two fronts. First, I was admitting to my feelings of discouragement and disappointment in having to live a sacred story that did not fit my identity as a teacher. Second, I was telling the world. However, I continued knowing instinctively that it was what I had to do. I could no longer live or listen to others who could not live a story that did not fit with what it meant for me to be a teacher. When I became a teacher, like so many other teachers, I did not envision what I had to become on the landscape to belong.

I want to tell my story as I was living it, not as I was supposed to be living it so others, too, can begin to express their hopes for an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of students and the world.

Notebook 1 – Coming to the Inquiry

Reading, rereading, writing, and rewriting stories and journal entries from the early 80s into the more intensive journaling over the past two years is part of my story as an educator, but the story extends earlier, beyond the last 20 years. I often ask myself why I chose to become a teacher. What messages did I receive about becoming a teacher? How did I become a teacher who needed to have a voice in making a difference in the lives of my students and teachers? Why have I struggled with the theory-to-practice story of professional development? The best place to start would be the very first recollection of my teaching career. That was when I was five . . .

Learning in My Pre-School Classroom

The two brown, wrinkled, full to capacity shopping bags with paper handles made strong by the twisting and meshing of paper, represent my life as a teacher--worn and wrinkled, but not torn and tattered. Well used and loved, they contain the knowledge, the imaginary plans, and the student prepared work, forever needing marking. As I go around the house, outside my classroom with my two paper school bags I am the teacher.

My classroom has a huge, old, brown desk that looks more like a dresser. My desk is the only desk in the room because my bed fills the remainder of my classroom. The bed is where I look out into the sea of students. My students do not have names or faces. They are just there when I need to teach them. There is the slate coloured blackboard in my `classroom where I spend the majority of my time when I am teaching. It is the place where my students and I connect about the important things--the things I have learned and come to know in the living room and kitchen when I am conversing with other teachers like my dad, the babysitter, or my mom(Remembered Story, March 1, 1998).`

A few days ago, I started to give serious thought as to why I became a teacher. I gave my mom a phone call to find out what had happened to the old brown desk. My mother did not have any recollection of a desk in my room--even after a lot of explaining what it looked like. We decided that I must have been thinking about the big brown dresser that is now in the cabin. I wonder how I came to see that dresser as my desk (Journal Entry, March 8, 1998).

At the age of five I had begun to become the teacher I would, 35 years later, fight to sustain. I had a captive student body in that first class, that is, the imaginary students. Yet I chose to spend a good part of my time talking to the other adults outside my classroom. My mom, dad, and babysitter did not make fun of my school play. They answered my questions and carried on a conversation about my schoolwork as though it really was my life work. My way of knowing at that time connected to the voice I had begun to develop with my early caregivers. They did not tell me how to be in my classroom. I learned from watching and talking.

By the age of seven, I began to create a new story of what it meant to be a teacher. I was privy to the after hours discussions that took place in the hallways and staff room of my mother's school. That is when I came to know about being a teacher on a different place or landscape, apart from the one in my home.

I listened to the stories told by the teachers. I did not question whether I was hearing secret or cover stories.

> Classrooms are, for the most part, safe places, generally free from scrutiny, where teachers are free to live stories of practice. These lived stories are essentially secret ones. . . . When teachers move out of their classrooms onto the out-of-classroom place on the landscape, they often live and tell cover stories, stories in which they portray themselves as experts . . . (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25)

Observing teachers as they entered each other's classrooms, as they clustered around the table in the staff room, and as they took concerns into the hallways informed my later ideas of professional development, that is as places where teachers dialogue as a way of knowing or what I have come to know as developing personal practical knowledge. I learned through observation and interpretation. I also learned through the ensuing discussions I came to have with my mom about teaching, but not until I learned how to work on a team from my dad.

Learning to be Part of a Team

In one of my first narrative and story research graduate classes, I told a story about my father's influence on my developing personal practical knowledge.

It was the middle of February--the dead of winter--when temperatures hovered around -40 C. We were spending our days and evenings at home. It was just too cold to think about warming up the car or walking anywhere. My father, brother, and sister were home Thursday, Friday, and Saturday since it was Teachers' Convention. My mom was in

Edmonton, 250 km away. We were used to spending this particular weekend in February with my dad. Sometimes we went as a family to Convention, but reminders of the endless days in the hotel, the exhausting shopping, along with the inevitable flu one of us always had made us plead to stay at home this year.

On Convention weekend, like all those before and those after, it was Connie's birthday. I believe it was her ninth birthday. We were going to celebrate after mom got home and baked the cake. My mom was super mom. She ensured birthdays were special events in between her work commitments. What I am coming to realize is how much support she had from my dad. Not just emotional, but physical support in the way of doing many of the household tasks in addition to half of the care giving tasks.

My mom was due home on Saturday night. Sometime late on Saturday afternoon (probably due to our constant whining about having nothing to do) dad suggested we make Connie's birthday cake to surprise mom. We hunted through all the recipe books. As far as I can recollect, my dad never baked a cake before or at least that is what he led us to believe, hence the search for how to carry out this task. Up until this time I was the pan greaser and dry ingredients sifter. That is, whenever mom and I baked.

> We finally decided on the cherry chiffon mix we found in the cupboard, read the directions, and voila--a cake with sides that ran over the pan came out of the oven. I was so proud of that cake. It felt great to be part of the team to make mom's arrival home more relaxing.
>
> Best of all was the sense of accomplishment I felt surging through my body. I realize now, in retrospect, that my father stood back and cheered me on to complete the task.
>
> I finally graduated to being a full-fledged baker, not just the pan greaser. I love baking to this day as I get satisfaction in trying out new recipes and seeing the results of my efforts as I did on that cold February day. More importantly, I still feel my father's gentle guidance, urging me to move onto the next step in the many other tasks I take on, not in telling me how to bake the cakes in my life (Remembered Story, January 24,1998).

A large part of my identity developed in a home where team was essential. Everyone's ideas counted. In addition, both my parents were caregivers. They shared in the role that is slowly becoming the norm 30 years later. Back in the 60s and 70s my father bandaged our scraped knees, made our lunches, and listened to our tales of woe during the day when my mom was at work. In the evening, mom took over when dad went to work. I always felt special as a child because I had a special relationship with my dad. That relationship has continued to influence my personal and professional life. My dad continues to be a catalyst in the construction of my current personal practical knowledge. He continues to listen to my stories of teaching and living in a manner that makes me feel I have the answers to questions from deep within, if only I will take the time to listen to myself. I cherish the moments we continue to have together and know he will always influence how I view and learn from the world in the same way I cherish the moments of being in dialogue with mom about being in the classroom.

Learning from Dialogue with My Mom

I remember one afternoon in particular. It was one of those moments representing my early knowing about being in dialogue with other educators before I had my own classroom. This memory also represents the need I had toward the end of obtaining my Bachelor of Education degree, in becoming a teacher who learns in relationship.

I wrote this story as an interim field text in one of my graduate classes when I began reflections on the various early influences on my personal practical knowledge.

Fall always signified going back to school and here I am, except there are no students. It is Sunday. Mom gets so excited when I actually have a chance to visit her class these days. With only a few weekends home, we talk on the telephone. That does not stop us. We invariably end up talking school. I do not have my official class yet, because I am only in third year at university, but that does not stop the talk. Discussing classroom happenings and new ideas has been a way of communicating with mom for as long as I can remember. We have a real bond when it comes to sharing teaching experiences. Much of our time doing things together, whether it is gardening, canning, or shopping, revolves around teaching. I cannot imagine another way of spending time together. I am very lucky to have a mentor who is so open in sharing her experiences in the classroom.

Mom's classroom and home are her life. The two merge into one, school sometimes becomes home and home sometimes becomes school. We are at home in school and in school at home, because that is what our life, too, has become in the process. In order for mom to be able to teach with the passion she has, while raising us at the same time, she has had to make the two parts into one. We are used to being a part of the school discussions because problem solving school issues together is how we, together as a family, solve the other problems. Sometimes in solving school problems, we begin to solve world problems. That is how Sunday mornings after church and brunch are spent. The whole family dialoguing on other possibilities around the injustices we witness on a daily basis. So much of who we are as a family connects to those long discussions we have after a meal. This is especially so on the lazy Sundays that eventually take me to mom's classroom these days when I am at home visiting.

Mom is showing me her bulletin boards. What a great idea--the students' work is so varied and at different depths. You can see how different students interpreted the instructions in their outcomes. It looks like they really got into this assignment because all 27 students produced a product. I bet they were enthusiastic because they had spent the last two weeks daily charting their progress and understanding of their feelings as a class. Sometimes it feels like I will never have my own classroom to share with my mom. At these times the waiting is unbearable although I do enjoy hearing about her classroom and the exciting things they are doing. We always get into such philosophical discussions that make me think harder about what I am learning at university. I am so lucky to have someone to bounce ideas back and forth. It seems so much of our conversations revolve around the classroom and students. I wonder what she has in mind for this next unit. She was talking about her unit on "The Hole in the Fence." That sounds like an interesting way to teach social skills (Remembered Story, January 24, 2001).

Long before I had my first real classroom, I learned to be in dialogue. I could not wait to have my own students, to share what we were doing, and to eventually find other teachers who wanted to share their experiences, as I had with my mom. So much of what I know about being a teacher evolved during those long discussions with my mom alongside the theory I learned both at university and in subsequent conferences and professional development activities. I learned to teach through sharing stories of teaching. I learned to teach laying stories beside theories and research. Juxtaposing stories, research, and theory provided me insight to further question my teacher identity and the teacher I wanted to become.

Although I loved being a classroom teacher, I could also see possibilities outside the classroom. I felt these other possibilities would become a part of my life as an educator in the process of doing what I loved most--being in dialogue with both teachers and students as we created our individual and collective knowing. Therefore, I sought out others to share my learning inside and outside the classroom, on different places and in different spaces, on the educational landscape.

Learning from My Student Experiences

Looking back now, as I begin to write this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I remember the 10 and 11-year-old I once was. As I reflect back to when I was in elementary school, I remember being a very vocal and outgoing individual. I was pretty much the class leader and felt very confident about my place with my peers. A story from my year six class demonstrates this confidence.

We have the open area to ourselves for the third day in a row. Today we actually have costumes. My grey wig is perfect. I do believe I look like Granny from the Beverly Hill Billies and I sound increasingly like her all the time. This role is perfect for me because I am so bossy. No one seems to mind. I always have something to say and am usually the first one to voice my opinion. I usually raise my hand to read aloud whenever the chance arises. I feel great because I know what I want and how I can get what I want. Every day is grand (Remembered Story, December 6, 2001)!

As I think about this story in relation to my Junior High years, not much changed. I was pretty much a vocal student who ran for School Council and participated in weekend projects at the school. School continued to play a very significant part in my life. I worked with my peers to make school a place for others to feel at home, as I did. Having a very strong voice throughout my Junior High years continued to define who I was amongst my peers, but I also spent a good deal of time with my family. I can remember many table talks about decisions regarding future holidays and about accomplishing daily tasks as a team. Home and school life consisted of being in conversation with others and my role was an integral one. Like the early conversations with my mom, dad, and the babysitter, I continued to construct my identity through, and with, others who respected my ideas.

High school was both different and the same. Although I began to think before speaking, I continued to have an equal relationship with many of my peers and teachers. In the sciences and math I felt I was absorbing material much like a sponge. However, the memory of my Social Studies 30 teacher, Mr. Bently, encouraging dialogue in class stays with me. As I reflected in the Prologue, I felt comfortable voicing my opinions in both small and large group activities. I continued to be involved in activities like the Year Book Committee where I was creating an avenue for bringing ideas and individuals together to represent our living as a team.

When I think back to my early years as a student, I was very fortunate because the constructed way of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986) learned in my first classroom or my bedroom, for the most part, was reinforced throughout the first 12 years of my school life. Leaving the security of the small town only meant that I would be entering another chapter of my life.

I was excited to begin university to become a real teacher with my very own class of real live students. I intended to use my voice, along with other teacher voices, to connect my knowing in the larger community of teachers.

Learning in the First Years of Teaching

I sometimes wonder where my strong willed 10-year-old self resided. I am coming to believe she surfaced every once in awhile with new found strength and determination to remind me of who I was before I learned to take my cues from those in positions of perceived power. Rereading my journals from the early 80s, with a different purpose, I believe she tried to make herself known through different entries along the way. Although I reread my journals on various occasions in the past, I was surprised when I found the following entry in my very first journal from 1982 as I began this research inquiry.

Students should have a chance to discuss changes they feel are pertinent. My role is to help them see how they can grow from what they regard as detrimental to their well-being (Journal Entry, January 9, 1982).

I wanted to empower my students to be able to create their knowing as I had in my family when I began teaching. As I look back on this entry, almost 20 years later, I can feel the emphasis on *changes they feel are pertinent.* I wanted my students to become more confident in trusting their knowing of what they needed to change in the world, not to rely on someone like myself telling them. I remember the energy created in those small groups during my second year of teaching where knowing was being created. The strongest memory from this particular entry is the conversation I had with the consultant who happened to pass by my classroom during one of these small group discussions. The consultant walked into my room and commented about how much learning was going on. Together we recreated the kind of conversation I was used to having with mom. He left me with new questions regarding my knowing about this particular group of students as he asked what we were going to do next.

The statement that I made at the end of the above journal entry speaks to what I wanted to create with teachers 20 years later with teacher networking. I wanted my students to go beyond what was comfortable in their knowing and then reflect on what they learned about themselves as individuals living the challenge of moving out of their comfort zone.

My first real teaching assignment, in a school where consultants lived, felt like an extension of my family life. The consultants were like new family members who wandered in and out of my class and invited me to do the same in their places within the school setting. I looked forward to their questions, wonders, and suggestions along the way during those first three years. Sometimes I wandered into their space when I needed confirmation or a question answered. Along with the consultants, I was fortunate to have a principal who also encouraged me to wonder aloud. Like my family, he often left me with a more difficult thought to ponder back in my classroom with my students. The only things missing from my first teaching experience were the two brown, wrinkled paper bags and yet I needed to know something more about myself off the educational landscape.

Two Year Leave

In all of the years before arriving at university, I never questioned becoming a real teacher with my very own classroom. Then it was a reality. I had my very own real students in a real classroom. Everything I dreamed and hoped for happened just as I imagined it would. Try as hard as I might, I knew there was something more that I had to do and it meant leaving teaching after my third year. I chose to embark on a two year unpaid leave. When I look back to that time wondering what it was that I had to do, the quick and easy answer, that I became accustomed to giving over the years, was that I wanted to think about becoming a child psychologist. After my two year leave, I returned to the classroom because I was not brave enough to stay the course outside the classroom. I did not know who I was if not a teacher. It was acceptable to wander outside the margins a little, but I needed the comfort of what I knew best, how I knew myself best and that was being a teacher. Returning seemed the right thing to do. I allowed myself time out to experiment a little, but I convinced myself I could do more for students within my classroom with greater ease because I had not practiced to be a child psychologist as I had practiced to be a teacher. I remember returning to teaching, walking down the quiet hallway on my way to my class one morning, like every morning after that for the next 14 years. It was a little after eight o'clock. The routine was almost unbearable and yet I dared not think about straying outside the story of teacher for the first few years back, at least. I knew what awaited me at each interval for the remainder of the day and yet I dared not stray out of a teacher plotline.

Instead, I chose to find ways to become the teacher I always envisioned I would be. In that second school assignment, my second principal, Mr. Patterson, helped me do just that. He assigned me to be the Science Coordinator for the school--the subject I found the most challenging of all to teach. His comment was, “What better way to learn how to be a better science teacher than by helping other teachers?” It was a challenge I took very seriously. So seriously, in fact, that upon entering the staff room one day, with another one of my great ideas for a whole school plan for the upcoming Science Olympics, I was told, “Get off cloud nine. That’ll never happen.” Mr. Patterson just laughed when I arrived, not one minute after the comment, in his office. He commented, “Even amoeba need shaking every once in a while.” I realized at that moment that I had taken on a greater challenge than I first anticipated. Motivating other staff members to work together on the Science Olympics was my first opportunity to work with other teachers. Its success, now that I look back upon that year, was due in large part to Mr. Patterson’s plan to use my enthusiasm to create a team of teachers to work toward a common goal. In other words, the teachers did not have a choice in participating. A much greater success was in the possibilities I envisioned creating for both students and teachers. I was, I thought, being the teacher I always dreamed of being. Mr. Patterson continued to encourage me to take on leadership roles that brought teachers together to plan for our student body. He always maintained teachers were the professionals and knew what to do, therefore, he expected we would create the appropriate kinds of learning opportunities for students. He also pushed every one of us out of our comfort zone like the amoeba he referred to on that fateful morning when I thought my world had fallen apart. Our teacher knowledge was both respected and challenged at the same time. Edicts from central office seemed to make little impact on my teaching during that second teaching assignment. After Mr. Patterson retired, I eventually moved to my third teaching assignment, much like the second one, where I was encouraged to have a voice in bringing teachers together to work for the benefit of the students in our school.

I was fortunate that my first three administrators recognized my need to be in relationship with other educators and provided me with small windows of opportunity to feel I was making a difference. I captured some of these moments in my journal.

The whole idea of empowering teachers is becoming the focus. That is why a paper on this process should be very interesting. The focus of my paper will be "Collaboration: Empowering Teachers and Implications for Schools." It seems collaboration is in the wind, but how serious are "they" about allowing for collaboration. What are the forces that bring about something like collaboration? Can collaboration be effective in a top-down system or will it, in turn, have positive effects on this top-down, patriarchal system? I have already witnessed how strategic planning worked. It definitely was an administratively driven format. I felt my participation was a token one at best. The first part of my paper must be on the why of collaboration. In other words, what are the positive implications of collaboration? What effect will collaboration have on teachers, school settings, and districts? Much of my discussion will have to centre on the empowerment of teachers and improvement in the education for students/society. In essence, I will be showing how or why collaboration is the way to go for education. There is great excitement behind all of this. I must keep scheduling good work sessions because I am very interested (Journal Entry, January 29, 1991)!

The paper that I refer to was a paper for a graduate class at the university. This was the second time I enrolled in a graduate class at the university with the intention of beginning my Master's degree.

Things went very well in class tonight. I enjoy the discussions and just being where there is so much knowledge. I am going to teach part-time to be able to pursue my degree this time (Journal Entry, February 2, 1991).

Searching for Spaces

Like my mother, who needed to connect with educators throughout Alberta, I found places off the school landscape where I could articulate my growing personal practical knowledge. I joined various committees off the school landscape to participate in creating knowledge. One such committee was the strategic planning committee formed in 1991. As I reflect once again, in another journal entry from this time, I realize I sought out ways to be in relationship to construct knowledge with other educators, but my experiences were not always what I expected or needed.

What a day it has turned out to be. I ended up very frustrated and tense. I have decided that I must voice my opinions regarding strategic planning, but they must not overwhelm me as they did today. I feel so very strong about how this whole process is unfolding. The confusion I felt over the last three weeks is legitimate. I need to find a constructive way to vent my concerns, but at the same time be constructive in bringing about change. Talking to other individuals on the committee and in my group will be helpful as a first step (Journal Entry, September 9, 1991).

I was beginning to realize the many facets of influence there were on a teacher. For the first time I became aware of the directives from above over which I had little control. I was beginning to question the different meanings of collaboration I experienced on the educational landscape.

In the process of attempting to have a voice in bringing about change, I was frustrated and confused about my involvement on the one hand, and determined to persevere on the other. In other words, I refused to give up on what I believed was so necessary to my identity as an educator. I needed to be in dialogue to understand my own and my students' understanding of our place in the present and future. I wanted so much to make a difference and yet was concerned about being overwhelmed in the process. I remember the feelings of frustration. I felt my role on the committee, like the other members, was a superficial attempt to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process. I refused to give up. I ended this journal entry with the decision to talk to individual committee members to see if I could at least understand my frustration and perhaps find another way to create the dialogue I needed to feel like I was making a difference. This journal entry speaks to my frustrations in attempting to have a strong voice with which to create possibilities on the one hand and the determination to create understanding with other committee members about the frustration I was experiencing.

As I write now, I find it interesting that I needed to talk to other members on the team regarding my frustrations. At that time in my teaching career, I needed to know if there was something wrong with the way I participated in committees. This was the first time I questioned my teacher identity in relation to the identities of other teachers. Was I different? Why was I different? Why did I feel frustration when others seemed content with the processes occurring on the landscape?

Growing Tired of Searching

As I read through my many, many journal entries I began to see how many sentences began with *I am exhausted (January 18, 1994), I am tired (January 28, 1994).* I also see how hard I kept pushing myself in the following entries.

Tonight we are at school late. It seems that is all I do! After tonight there is nothing more to do, so it is not all bad (Journal Entry, March 24, 1994).

What is it that I find so disturbing? It must be the finality, the stark reality of having to survive on one's own in this world. Is this what I am running from? I go overboard to make the world a caring place--yet I know it is very cold and for the most part, I feel so very isolated. I keep myself busy so I do not have to feel that isolation.

I was just looking back at last year's entry for tomorrow's date. What I find most fascinating is that things have not changed much. I am still too busy. There are things to do all the time, yet I feel like I am accomplishing a lot. I guess there is this need to be busy and so that is what I do. I seem to be coming out ahead except that I am always running around or crashing somewhere (Journal Entry, May 21, 1993).

The harder I worked to find a place for teachers' voices, the more exhausted I became. The more exhausted I became the harder I searched. It was more than a roller coaster. I knew only two speeds--high or nothing so I would not have to feel the lack of caring places for both students and teachers. I also thought I needed to find other spaces off the educational landscape. I was sure that finding places to volunteer and build my skills as a team member would rejuvenate me.

I make healthy choices for myself. I am happy. Next year I will be a member of the Canadian College of Teachers, Toastmasters, Canadian Cancer Society, Director of the Redwater Constituency Riding (Journal Entry, July 4, 1993).

I was definitely searching for a place where I would feel valued for my contributions, but more importantly where I would have a chance to learn new skills and ways of being. Much like the previous two year leave, I was searching for a part of myself that was missing. I felt incomplete. I was coasting at school because everything was routine. Once again, I dreaded walking through the front door each morning. Inside my classroom, I felt my students and I were relatively safe from the boredom lurking outside the door until we heard, "Do we have to do this? Why do we have to do this? How will this help me?" I, too, wondered about the senselessness of sometimes having to act like a remote-controlled teacher following directives from outside the classroom walls.

When I found the Canadian College of Teachers I thought I had found the perfect place where I could dialogue and make spaces for other teachers to dialogue with me. I dreamed in my journals. I was excited once again because I found other teachers who wanted to share teacher stories from their former teaching days as the majority of the members were retired. They, too, were excited to have a practicing teacher to bring in other practicing teachers! My excitement spilled over into my journals--

Canadian College of Teachers

What can and should it be doing for educators?

Role	*reflective practice*
Issues to discuss	*researchers in the classroom*

Place for teachers to learn together, outside the school

rejuvenate, share ideas, and meet new people

Teachers making decisions require time to create philosophy that fits with what we have experienced.

Now I feel I have the energy to tackle the Canadian College of Teachers. First, I must make this next presentation a huge success. It means pushing harder than I have ever pushed for anything before. This is my chance to be much more involved in education.

I want to make the Canadian College of Teachers functional/vibrant/useful to education and the community. I have a vision.

Teachers will be involved in lifelong learning, much more knowledgeable about pedagogical decisions and curriculum matters. We, like other professionals, will stand up to defend what we believe and know to be the truth.

I have a prime opportunity to get teachers to see themselves in a positive empowered mode through the Canadian College of Teachers (Journal Entry, March 19, 1994).

My role as an educator is to influence/challenge my colleagues to reevaluate their roles as educators. As President of the Canadian College of Teachers, I have a dual role. The first is to make the College meaningful and the second, to have teachers interacting more collaboratively with each other.

Teachers cannot wait for the system to change. We must push for the kind of professional culture we need (Journal Entry, October 4, 1995).

I remember well, my excitement of the first few times I was part of The Canadian College of Teachers. I had finally found another place to be in conversation with other teachers as I had with my mom. After six months, I became the Program Chair, as I was one of the two practicing teachers out of the 30 members. My job was to bring other practicing teachers into the College by creating a program that would be enticing to those currently out in the schools. The one evening that attracted practicing teachers was the evening I arranged for a panel to discuss the merits of Charter schools, as they were becoming a reality in Alberta. It was the one time the room was full. We could not seem to attract practicing teachers to become members. Like my mom, the members wanted to maintain the kind of conversations they had with other teachers in school before they retired, but we could not seem to find a way to entice practicing teachers to join in these conversations off the school landscape. This challenge resonated in the various Canadian College of Teacher groups across Canada and became the focus of the national conference in Vancouver during the summer of 1996. After the national conference I decided to put my energies back into my school and classroom.

Focusing Again on My School Landscape

Back in my classroom, other wonders crept into my journal.

In all of this I keep asking myself what is important? What are my beliefs about what is important? Today when Roberta asked me to share a story, I said we did not have time. Time--only for reaching the objectives set out in the curriculum--is more important than listening to students' stories. Thinking that made me promise we would share her story later. When she did share, it was a story another male student could not listen to. He covered his ears and started making whistling sounds so he would not be able to hear *about killing cats! He must have heard, though, because he suddenly remembered when his uncle had to put down a horse with a broken leg. His story allowed Roberta the opportunity to tell us the cat was very sick, which is why it had to be put down (Journal Entry, March 13, 2000).*

As I told this story from my past, in my journal questions began to surface. Was this discussion learning? Was it more important for my students to finish writing in their journals or to tell stories to each other? I began to understand why my students sometimes said they did not have anything to write in their journals. I did not always give them time to tell the important stories to each other. Had I not taken time to hear the cat story, my students would have learned their stories were not important while writing to satisfy the teacher was!

I am amazed at the kinds of things I almost missed learning on the occasions I almost began to live the rhetoric of conclusions coming down the metaphoric conduit. Thank goodness I did not get pulled into following only the prescriptions coming down the conduit, making teaching to unit objectives more important than discussing what was most crucial to my students' learning. Living my story as a teacher and learner within the classroom with the prescriptions coming down the metaphoric conduit consumed a lot of my energy. I found myself continually searching for ways to live my teacher story to stay within the range of prescriptions coming down the metaphoric conduit.

One distinct memory I have of the last five or so years was the number of times I would come bounding out of my classroom searching for someone to share my excitement, only to be met with a blank stare. One message I learned to live with outside the classroom was, "Teachers should not brag." Another was, "If you bring too many dilemmas to the staff room conversation, you look incompetent." The only way I knew how to make sense of my experience was to write in my journal.

If we, as teachers, spent time figuring out what our stories are and how that makes curriculum (that is reconstruction of curriculum meaning from personal experiences), we would be able to sift through the rubble to understand what it is that we are trying to achieve in our individual classrooms (Journal Entry, January 15, 1998).

As I wrote, I became more convinced of the need to have opportunities to become more aware of the discrepancies and dilemmas we faced on the different places on the educational landscape. I wanted to move, with my colleagues, to a space where we did not have to tell cover stories. I wanted to feel comfortable letting others know when I was feeling overwhelmed or discouraged. I wanted my colleagues to know that we could create different possibilities in telling our many different kinds of stories to one another.

My journal became my place of refuge and a source of inspiration to be able to live both within the in-classroom and out-of classroom place. I also turned to professional journals and articles whenever I had a moment. Professional reading became the voice of other teachers; journal responses, in turn, became my voice.

It is time for me to start journaling what I am reading in relation to what is happening in my class. Today was a very good example of doing research in the class. After reading about how good readers create mental images of what they are reading, I asked my students how many made pictures in their heads as they read or heard a story. Two students in particular, who are having difficulty with reading, said they did not. Those who like reading, do. Tomorrow I will change the focus to reading with a pencil(Journal Entry, December 6, 1994).

Connecting with Others on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

I was fortunate to have two colleagues who returned to university to obtain their graduate degrees, share their university stories with me. Their stories from the university landscape provided me with a reminder of other ways to be an educator. Both worked with my students during the 1996/1997 school years and so I had an opportunity to continue to build my personal practical knowledge in the in-classroom place. I did not have to rely on those in my school or district because I found individuals off the school landscape who also wanted to create possibilities for my students at a time when prescriptions for standardization were slowly filtering down the metaphoric conduit. I had other teachers who lived off the landscape who were open to reflecting and questioning what we were experiencing within the classroom in relation to what was happening on other places on the educational landscape. Therefore, I was able to live the teacher identity I learned long ago in my first classroom with my mom, dad, and the babysitter without feeling the full effects of what standardization would come to mean. I was able to envision ways of incorporating what I needed to do within my classroom to cope with standardization. I knew I could not ignore what was coming down the conduit for my students' sakes, but I also knew that I had to incorporate the mandates in a way that honoured both my own way of knowing as well as my students' ways of knowing. Being in relationship with others who were interested in dialoguing, once again rejuvenated my hopes that perhaps other teachers within the school were ready to enter the same kind of dialogue I was experiencing with the two teachers from the university landscape. In other words, I was confident that eventually we could reverse the influence up the conduit by beginning a dialogue around standardization and how it affected our lives in the classroom and on the larger school landscape. Perhaps there was a place to include a more results-oriented focus into our teaching and learning. But what did that mean for each individual teacher in relation to a particular group of students? More importantly, could our individual experiences with standardization influence those individuals at the top of the metaphoric funnel?

Disappointed Once Again

What did I expect? I cannot believe how naïve I was. I thought we were on the same page. That is, my principal and I. I thought this was the perfect opportunity to bring teachers together to do classroom research, but more importantly to talk about strategies to get our students to be better writers. My plan was to have a discussion about where our students are at, where we would like to see them in a month or so, and ways to get there. I know there are many years of experience, hence knowledge, on this staff. I have worked beside these teachers for eight years now. If only I could have convinced them to talk about what we already know and what we could learn from sharing what we do currently know. So what happened? Why do I feel like we wasted our time? Why do I feel like I am from another planet because I see things so differently? It feels like they would like to zap me to another planet so I would not bring up discussions like these. I feel like they want me to mind my own business and keep my nose in my own classroom where it belongs. If only I would just let them teach their own students without wasting time during staff meetings so they could get back to their classrooms to plan. Yet, we did come up with some great strategies already in use. There was potential in the room during that part of the discussion. Perhaps that is why I felt so let down when we did not take our work to the next level and set a future date to meet with our findings, concerns, and *celebrations I had so passionately argued we needed. Like so many other times, I feel, there was a hidden agenda. What was the purpose of setting objectives, brainstorming strategies with the expectation that we would come up with more of our own in the process, if we were not going to share the knowledge we gleaned? I suppose the more important question is why does this drive me crazy. I think I know the answer. I need to talk and learn, with and from my peers, to feel like I am growing and developing my skills and knowledge as a teacher. We could have worked specifically with our school population knowing what we know about our students. We could have made changes to our individual and collective perception of what our students really need to become better writers by sharing our knowledge and experience with what we have just learned at this meeting. Who knows where this might have led. Well, at least I have Susan to share ideas. I just wish one day that we could include more staff in our after school discussions (Journal Entry, February 11, 1997).*

As standardization was beginning to appear, I was still hopeful to use the new terminology to bring about dialogue between teachers. I actually saw a possibility for beginning to reflect on our teacher knowledge to make a difference in our students' lives. I soon realized that was not the intended outcome of my administrator or others with whom I worked. I would not give up. I would find another landscape from which to tell stories to create my personal practical knowledge in a way that made sense to my previous personal practical knowledge.

I am going to incorporate all the intuitive wisdom of the last 40 years with the skills from my career, volunteer work, and relationships, making sense of the world through creative and collective consciousness of myself with those I am in contact with. I *am making behavioural changes that are bringing me closer to my sacred centre of purpose--where I am making a difference in this world (Journal Entry, October 16, 1997).*

I feel much more positive and alive. I have an agenda that is purposeful to me. My intention for this fall/winter is to learn ways to be in balance and to listen. I will not take a university course until January (Journal Entry, October 25, 1997).

Coming to the inquiry was a long journey without a map. I did not know it would take two attempts to enter graduate studies before I would seriously pursue this degree. Perhaps part of the struggle was in not understanding, completely, what was causing the deep frustration I was experiencing on the professional knowledge landscape and in some ways expecting to experience the frustration as part of being a teacher. The long discussions with my mother reflected the kinds of successes and frustrations I experienced. Thankfully I had my journal to write my way through to the other side, creating stories along the way, weaving forward and backward, inward and outward, situated in a place in the educational landscape, to provide a sense of direction when I felt I could no longer go forward (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). There were the two colleagues who returned to university and the one teacher who shared my need to be in dialogue. Any other time I wanted to talk about my life inside the classroom, I felt like I was either bragging or bringing everyone else down. The staff room was a place of light-hearted, casual conversation--a place where teachers could forget the difficulties on the battlefield, so to speak. I needed a place where I could be my real teaching self without feeling I was thinking too much.

Notebook II – Living the Inquiry

Beginning to live the inquiry was both scary and exhilarating at the same time. In my first graduate class, "Research in the Classroom," I was encouraged to speak about my personal practical knowledge. I was scared, at first, to voice what I believed I needed on the personal professional landscape. I was accustomed to university classes where group work or discussions were a small appendix to a class or two. What did I know compared to my classmates who were at various stages of their research? Would I know enough to contribute meaningfully to the weekly discussions? What about my greatest fear of all--sharing my writing, weekly, with two other colleagues, one of whom was the former teacher from my school who visited my classroom. One thing my past school life taught me was that I could not write. Here I was amongst teachers who were writing and sharing their writing with one another! Had I made a mistake?

Not long into the class, I felt my fears slowly abate, as the three hours became the highlight of each week. My story of experience began to surface in both the conversation around the table and in my writing as I heard other stories and wonders from classmates from different places and spaces. "Stories illuminate one person's life experience, yet in doing so, evoke stories from others and remind us of our interconnectedness" (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, p. 7). I wrote the story of my first classroom when I was five and the story of baking the cakes of my life with my father. I realized stories of my past informed my personal practical knowledge. I was beginning to understand how my early family life created my desire to learn by doing and talking about what I was doing. It felt like I found my second home after wandering for the past 18 years. Dr. Clandinin, my advisor and first professor, understood, lived, and encouraged educators like myself to honour our personal practical knowledge on the professional knowledge landscape.

> To understand teacher knowledge we also need to understand teachers' knowledge contexts, work we pursue under the heading of *professional knowledge landscapes.* The relation of teachers' knowledge to the landscape and of both to their community context yields a framework for re-imagining the place of schools, and their participants, in the larger theoretical and policy environment. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996a, pp. 68 – 69)

Moving Forward in Many Directions at Once

Courage led to exhilaration as I found my way to a table of educators and read about other educators engaged in similar types of dialogue around other tables in other places. Hollingsworth's (1994) description of her six years of dialoguing with beginning teachers echoed what I now saw as my new teacher identity on the university landscape. "More than gaining specific guidance for immediate concerns, the conversations seemed to provide the intellectual stimulation and social interaction needed to create, act upon and analyze our own broader knowledges about teaching" (p. 47).

I felt like I was walking on water when I discovered Darling-Hammond's (1998) article entitled "Teachers and Teaching: Testing Policy Hypotheses from a National Commission Report." In speaking to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, she cited a study wherein "Teachers consistently report that they experience much more powerful learning when they participate in new vehicles for professional development such as teacher networks, teacher academies, professional development school . . . action research projects, and study groups within their schools" (p. 9) exactly what I secretly envisioned happening for teachers! I felt this especially after Area Three teachers in my school district had an opportunity to meet in grade groupings for 20 minutes at the end of a joint professional development day in November 1997. I felt confident, yet nervous, about the possibility of beginning a competing professional development story on the professional knowledge landscape and yet I knew I had to take the next step; that was, to receive permission to implement at least two more opportunities for teacher networking during the 1997 – 1998 school year.

You cannot imagine my surprise when the principals agreed to allow teacher networking as a pilot project for the remainder of the year. This did not, however, quell the questions that framed my desire to compose a competing professional development story challenging what could be seen as the sacred story of professional development wherein experts' knowledge is passed down to teachers. Various excerpts from my journal during this time represent my questions and concerns about trying to implement a competing professional development story.

Planning for the Sessions

One of my first concerns was with the differing expectations between the principals and teachers. I suppose I should say the principals' and my expectations because that is what concerned me the most, at least in the beginning. When the principals responded so favourably to my proposal to implement teacher networking with comments like, "This is exactly what we are being told we need to do," I became suspicious. Perhaps it was my previous experience with strategic planning that made me cautious. I knew my purpose for implementing teacher networking was to create safe places to honour teacher experience and knowledge. I did not know exactly what was meant by, "This is exactly what we are being told needs to happen." I must have had enough experience with new initiatives on the educational landscape to know that I did not always have the same expectations as those further up the conduit. My journal became a place to both temper my enthusiasm and to remember to be cautious.

I wonder how I can initiate the process of teacher networking in a way to meld principal and teacher expectations so they, at least, have a common understanding of how powerful teacher networking could be (Journal Entry, February 22, 1998).

Thinking about how teacher networking would unfold with the principals' expectations next to my own, also caused me to reflect on how my teacher perceptions did not always concur with other teachers on the educational landscape.

Conle (1996) concluded her article with a number of questions, creating thought for my work with the Teacher Networking group, but first I need to begin with her end paragraph which speaks to where I am and have been for some time. If, in teacher education, we create public spaces for this kind of narrative work--in addition to more traditional activities based on discussion and argument--we may have a greater chance for teacher development (p. 321).

First, we have to get teachers talking. Conle (1996) made a sound case for how we begin to make connections to better understand our personal practical knowledge through a process she calls resonance. That is, stories told by others often conjure hidden or lost memories by making metaphorical connections. I agree with Conle. We make metaphorical connections unconsciously whenever we tell stories. Memories are triggered when we hear others' stories or are asked for clarification in our story telling.

Is that how we get teachers to realize their secret and cover stories? It is time to make sense of these connections to better understand the stories we are conveying. I often find myself infuriated with comments made by my peers in school. What is it that infuriates me? The emotion is strong.

I am often at odds with other educators about our role in the school setting and classroom. I need to understand more about that (Journal Entry, March 2, 1998).

In this journal entry I am asking for clarification on two levels. I wanted to understand the metaphors that trigger teachers to act in certain ways or to believe in the sacred story of professional development. I wanted to uncover the hidden memories that create the sacred story. I also wanted to know why my perception of what I needed was different from what most other educators appeared to need on the professional knowledge landscape. How was it that my professional development needs appeared to be different from most other teachers? Would other teachers help me see that which was hidden from me? Would I come to understand, through resonance, why their comments infuriated me? What metaphors from my past informed my irritation?

I am writing about my relationship to my mother in my works-in-progress. I hope that in sharing my thoughts with my writing group, new insights will continue to develop. Whether they do or not will depend on my receptivity to their ideas. The topic of my frustration has a purpose in my life as an educator. It keeps me on the fringe--much like the way I have lived my whole life. There I said it! I don't have to get involved because I do not agree. I always talk about leaving education. That will never happen. Therefore, I might as well get on with understanding the reasons for doing what I do in the school setting. What are my beliefs? Discussions with other educators is not enough. Journaling *and sharing journals searching for themes would be helpful. Time seems to be a factor, but again, is that my safety valve (Journal Entry, March 16, 1998)?*

Once again, I retreated inward. I could not find a way to reconcile what I needed in the external world. My journal became my safety net. As usual, I felt other educators were not available to hear my frustrations. It may have been that they, too, felt overwhelmed by their own experiences. It seemed we were always rushing to accomplish some task or another. In this entry, I am curious about time. The question I ask at the end insinuates that a lack of time also prevented me from coming to terms with the real problem I had on the professional knowledge landscape. Keeping myself busy made it look like I was progressing toward a goal, when in fact the goal was to get through each day.

Still, I was excited about the possibilities. Not only did I follow Jalongo and Isenberg's (1995) suggestion to begin my journal entries with "I learned . . ., I wonder . . ., I wish . . ., I need . . ." (p. 176), but I began to use the same kind of language in the discussions around the table in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development. These prompts pushed me to ask if it were possible to create similar experiences in my school district's professional development story. The conversations around the table in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development, along with my journal entries, continued to influence the work I was doing at my school with students, teachers, and parents.

I want my students to read for their own understanding, to develop their own questions that encourage them to think about their reactions to what they have just read *and then to meet with their peers who have read and responded to the same material (Journal Entry, February 23, 1998).*

It was not until I began to write around the entries with new knowledge about others' research that I uncovered a more in-depth understanding of how my ideas developed through writing along the way. In the following entry, I wrote about how teacher networking would encourage Freire's (1970) concept of praxis. In Freire's view, praxis is reflection-and-action-in-the-world. Praxis would enable teachers to change their perception of the world, hence, the world, in the process. As I wrote around this entry almost two years later, I think about what I meant by empowerment when I first envisioned teacher networking.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary (1998) defines empower as to "give power, to make able. Provide with the means, opportunity." I realized upon reading the definition that I knew implicitly how being empowered would allow teachers to participate in a future that we helped to create through thoughtful participation. I saw teachers involved in learning about themselves in relation to others by asking and responding to the critical questions in relation to experience and theory, thereby creating a better understanding of the past, present, and future.

I think what I hope for is empowerment. Teachers have been adapting teacher-proof materials and the stakeholders' expectations without thinking much about how they are, in fact, adapting curriculum for their students (Journal Entry, February 24, 1998).

I did not identify my work in a feminist perspective when I began to conceive of teacher networking as a competing professional development story. I did not even think of myself as a feminist. Yet much of my thinking and planning resulted from reading and identifying strongly with the feminist epistemology described by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) in *Women's Ways of Knowing*. I wanted to create opportunities for teachers to construct knowing from sustained conversations with one another. I was, in some ways, an idealist during the early stages of implementing teacher networking. I believed that if teachers had opportunities to be in conversation with one another they would eventually acknowledge personal practical knowledge as a way of knowing, instead of taking in the important knowledge through osmosis. What I failed to acknowledge was that not everyone feels comfortable coming to know through conversation.

Now, when I look back over the above journal entry, I realize I was, and still am, a liberal feminist who believes in making changes in existing structures through dialogue. I ended the entry with:

> *I hope that I, along with other teachers, will experience more cognitive dissonance in the group to become comfortable creating the new stories we need to affect the necessary change (Journal Entry, February 24, 1998).*

I hoped that new ways of knowing would evolve as teachers told and heard a variety of different stories about their experiences. That is, through the asking for clarification, critical thinking would encourage new stories. Kenway and Modra (1992) express what I hoped to create.

> Further, we agree with Roger Simon that to speak adequately about teaching and learning, "what is required is a discourse about practice that references not only what we as educators might actually do; but as well, the social visions such practices would support" (Simon, 1988, p. 2). Like

> him, we see that pedagogy is a term that can bear, better than can "teaching", the burdens of possibility as well as critique. (p. 140)

The Networking Sessions

You might say I jumped on the idea of teacher networking when the principals decided to allocate an hour of the joint professional development day in November 1997 toward teachers meeting in grade level groups. Even though that hour was very rushed as it was at the very end of the day, I saw possibilities. Like so many times in the past, I became quite excited about the possibility of having more opportunities for teachers to meet to share experiences as I had done so often in the past with my family. I quickly wrote a proposal that I presented on that fateful day in February1998. The principals agreed to schedule two teacher networking sessions during two early Thursday dismissal days along with doing a survey at the end of the year to determine the future of teacher networking. They scheduled the first session for the end of February, the second in April. I had the names of teachers who might be interested in hosting a meeting in their classroom or school for each grade. I organized the locations and notices went out. One of the host teacher's duties was to determine a location for the second session in April.

There were 13 schools in Area Three, therefore, the maximum number of participants for each grade level was at least 12, given that some schools had split grades. The regular professional development activities, usually held in each school on early Thursday dismissal days, were cancelled for the two teacher networking dates in February and April. Teachers had to attend the regular professional development activities on early Thursday dismissal days. In order to fit with the intention of teachers sharing and honouring experiences in safe places on the professional knowledge landscape, participation in teacher networking was voluntary.

I felt it was necessary to have a representative from each grade level to determine how to proceed with teacher networking in the future. I asked each of the teachers who hosted the first meeting to become a member of a steering committee that would meet at the end of the current year and then, three times a year.

Before I knew it, I was sitting in my first teacher networking session. There were six Grade 5 teachers, including myself, sitting in my classroom on that cold February day. Later, in the comfort of my home, I wrote in my journal,

> *My first Grade 5 networking session was quite different from our first meeting during the Professional Development Day in November. Teachers wanted to heal and did not want to talk about curriculum because they were professionals and could do curriculum in their own classrooms, thank you very much. I wonder what kind of new sacred stories are developing in Alberta with the recent cuts to education. Or should I say, I wonder how the sacred stories are being strengthened? On one hand teachers are saying they are professionals, but on the other, they feel they are not valued. They are being asked to do more and more with less and less. They are tired, burned out, and some are angry. During the meeting I asked, "Do you think these meetings might eventually bring about the changes we feel are necessary?" The answers were vague. Even though I was very discouraged during and after the meeting, I spent most of yesterday thinking how these teachers need to establish their identities by telling their professional stories to each other (Journal Entry, February 28, 1998).*

I would not let myself become discouraged. In fact, hearing the stories about feeling undervalued and needing time to heal, from the teachers in my grade level group, confirmed what I was feeling. In essence, this first meeting reinforced the need for professional development where teachers were encouraged to discuss their experiences along with feelings. The teachers may not have been ready to hear they could introduce change. I was overly optimistic hearing how disenchanted and tired they were. I felt the teachers did know what they needed. They needed to heal first.

Two weeks later, I wrote again about that first teacher networking session. I needed to clarify what I had experienced and subsequently written in the February 28, 1998 entry:

There is a concern with the stories we are choosing to explain our thinking. I remember the first grade planning between schools that we had a couple of weeks ago. We had a first year Grade 5 teacher with us. She must have been appalled at the stories we were telling. I found teachers apologizing for what the other teachers were saying. The beginning teacher did not say anything. She just listened to our stories and apologies. A 46-year-old teacher had just passed away from a heart attack the week before. We each went away from that meeting saying we had to take care of ourselves. The consensus was that if we do not make time for ourselves, we only have ourselves to blame. Maybe that was a good thing for the first year teacher to hear (Journal Entry, March 2, 1998)!

In rereading these two journal entries, I am surprised at how uncomfortable the teachers felt in hearing from each other what they needed. They were saying they needed to take care of themselves on the one hand, but apologizing for having that need, on the other. Even though I heard and wrote down those very words from that session, I would not fully appreciate the importance of what they were saying until much later in this autobiographical narrative inquiry.

Teacher networking encouraged and demanded that I become more aware of conversations in other places on the school landscape. The following journal entry demonstrates how writing about my students informed my sense of what I needed as a teacher on the professional knowledge landscape.

Do I listen to students' stories? We have so much in the curriculum to cover there isn't much time for stories. I remember talking to a group of students last year during lunch about their fears surrounding the youth gangs in their neighbourhood (after a murder in the community park). I could not comment. Could I understand? Could I make a difference? I have not thought much about either of those questions in the past. Thinking about the questions means I have to do something, or do I? Is validating their fear enough? Perhaps it is something that should have been discussed in class. Openly acknowledging their fears and concerns would have allowed some of the voices to come through. Perhaps that is why a student would not take her jacket hood off in class for a very long time--not until we started writing our memoirs and she started sharing hers in class (Journal Entry, March 7, 1998).

I needed to understand how validating our fears, in turn, validates our experiences, hence our knowing about our identities as both students and teachers. By listening to the fears of my students, I felt I was validating their experiences. I could not change their experiences, but I could let them know their fears were real and worthy of discussion. Perhaps in the process, a sense of having some control in how they responded in the future might ensue.

After writing this journal entry about my students, I realized I wanted teachers' experiences honoured through validation like I knew my students' experiences had to be honoured. I wanted the teachers to know that they, too, had some control in what happened to them on the educational landscape.

Reflecting on Different Places and Spaces

As I worked to create stories on different places on the educational landscape, I noticed similarities that resonated with what I learned in my home as I told and listened to the stories of my mom, dad, and babysitter from Notebook I. The stories were filled with meaning for each of the participants because emotions were allowed to come through. Students appeared more comfortable in their writing. Teachers began the networking session wanting to talk about how we were not valued and could die the next day without being recognized for past contributions.

Then there was my own story. Where did I fit in each of the stories and all the stories as a whole? I was a participant in the networking group, but I was also the catalyst for getting together to tell the stories we were telling. I always wondered how comfortable the teachers in my group were with my dual role. Did they see me as part of the sacred story when I asked questions like, "Do you think these meetings might eventually bring about the changes we feel are necessary?" Was I another person teachers had to be careful around because of my insistence to implement teacher networking? I did not ask these questions aloud. Perhaps I was afraid to hear the answers. I needed more time to let the process unfold without creating further constraints for myself.

Journal excerpts, discussions around the research table at the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development, and remembered stories began to create some of the pieces to the research puzzle. I would have to sort through many more layers of questions and stories before the puzzle began to take a shape I recognized.

Taking the "Research in the Classroom" course prepared me for a lot of soul searching. I have started asking some of the necessary questions--the answers are a long way away (Journal Entry, March 25, 1998).

The last teacher networking session found me back in my classroom. Teachers in my grade level wanted me to host the session. Was it that they did not feel comfortable with sharing their classroom spaces with other teachers just yet? I did not know the answer to this question. I did know, however, that I was ecstatic to hear they were willing to meet again and so agreed wholeheartedly that my classroom would be the meeting place in April.

I feel like I am back in that Social Studies 30 class. Although there are only five of us today, I feel like I am already amongst friends and this is only the second teacher networking session (not counting the meeting we had at the joint Professional Development day in November). We are meeting in my classroom again. I am surprised they want to come back to my classroom for the second meeting. I wonder if they are nervous to have other colleagues enter their classrooms. It does not really matter. We are meeting somewhere and that is what I needed. My students and I did some organizing before our visitors arrived. If I have to

> keep organizing my classroom to get ready for the meetings, I will. It is worth every second. Today is a more focused day. By that, I mean there is more discussion about teaching and learning. In fact there has been very little complaining about the terribly draining aspects of teaching that dominated the dialogue during our second meeting together. I did not know teachers still used the short reading passages with questions to teach comprehension. What will they think about the comprehension model I use? Oh well, maybe I will learn more if I explain what we do in our classroom (Remembered Story, April 14, 1998).

What changed? Why did the teachers willingly discuss curriculum during this session, but adamantly refused to in February? I remember that, back in February, a teacher had passed away suddenly. Perhaps the teachers were thinking about their own mortality. Perhaps they felt they had wasted their time complaining during the last session. Perhaps their principals outlined some expectations for the teacher networking sessions. Perhaps it was a result of the question I asked back in our February session about how they might influence principals that changed not only the type, but tone of the conversation on that day. Whatever the reason, this session was curriculum focused. I can only speculate about the reasons for the behaviour on the professional knowledge landscape on that last day of teacher networking in the first year.

Reflecting on the Research of Networking

Being a participant observer allowed me to write from many different places. Many of my field notes, in the form of journal entries, speak to how I lived in the new place as one who needed to have opportunities to be in dialogue with other teachers. I was excited about the dialogue regarding different ways to teach spelling. We were sharing different ways of being attentive to our students' needs. I began to think more about the students in my class who required more structure. Was I meeting their needs?

I also created a different place for other teachers to live. As I wrote in my journal, I was concerned about how the new teacher in my grade level group experienced the first session where there was a lot of complaining about life on the professional knowledge landscape. I wondered if we frightened or awakened her to what she would have to do to maintain her teacher identity. I wondered about those who chose to participate. Were they as excited about the possibilities we created together as I was, or were they participating because they felt obligated?

I also wondered about the teachers who chose not to attend the sessions. What kind of discomfort did teacher networking create for them? Did they feel discomfort or were they oblivious to another way of living on the landscape?

There were the other stories from the different grade levels where I was not a participant. How were they different without my participation? As I continued to question my many roles in teacher networking, I continued to search for ways to record my experiences that would reflect my new knowing along the way. I needed to move toward a better understanding of what I was experiencing in relation to my own needs as well as the needs of other teachers who were, for various reasons, involved and not involved in teacher networking.

After the teacher networking session in February, I began to think about how to organize my research data more coherently. Although I was journaling extensively, I needed to know how to make my autobiographical narrative inquiry represent my life on the professional knowledge landscape.

I have started a Notebook after reading McCormick Calkins (1991). I can hardly wait to start jotting down the feelings/ideas I have when in discussion with other teachers, especially during staff meetings (Journal Entry, March 2, 1998).

I returned to *Writing Between the Lines* (1991) as I began to write this research text. I was curious about why I decided to use the notebook format. Rereading the book, two years later, I imagine a critic sitting on my right shoulder, as suggested by the author, McCormick Calkins, asking questions as I write around journal entries. Notebooks allowed me to move my thinking the same way I lived my life on the professional knowledge landscape. McCormick Calkins explains:

> In our workshops, revision usually begins with seeing themes and entries that have the potential to become more, then growing and writing our way into those ideas and collecting parallel entries about them, and finally, standing on the shoulders of all we have written and read in order to write several pieces, usually with particular purposes and audiences in mind for each one. (p. 31)

As I began to write, reflect, and rewrite journal entries and stories along the way, I noticed how themes and wonders interacted to inform my next move on the professional knowledge landscape. Natural endings brought new beginnings, hence new notebooks from which to ponder how to move closer to meeting my need to be in dialogue.

Reflecting on Networking Through A Survey

At the end of the first year, and two opportunities for teacher networking after the joint professional development day, it was time to survey the teachers to decide how to proceed with teacher networking as a competing story. It was with mixed feelings that I prepared the survey. Only a small number of Area Three teachers participated in the two sessions. The five teachers out of 13 in my grade level, who participated, expressed enthusiasm. I wondered about the teachers in the other eight schools. I wondered too, if the teachers who participated in my group expressed enthusiasm because I was both participant and facilitator of the whole story.

Survey Comments

- Only if mandatory, would I be interested in serving. I am frustrated with the experienced teachers meeting and the junior people not showing.
- The meetings I attended were very helpful. I would like to see more. The first one was well attended, but the second one was not. I am not sure how to fix this.
- I would like to see the group meetings five times a year.
- When some meetings are changed, it is difficult to be in two places at once.
- I have not had much notice for these meetings. I attended once and there were only two of us. Great timbits, but not really productive.
- I really think the date should be set area wide – much easier to coordinate, schools less likely to plan conflicting events.
- Four meetings per year. Steering committee not necessary if we just suggested four main subject areas. Part of the value of these is the informal open sharing.
- Please try to choose more central schools.
- Not interested in meeting at any time, with anyone!
- As a first year Kindergarten teacher, I appreciated the contact and ideas and support received at these meetings. I do not think we should have more than three or four per year. Dates should be regular like the third Thursday of October, January, and April. But I think there will always be conflict for someone!
- Grade level meetings have the potential to be VERY VALUABLE, but they lose their punch when they occur too frequently. I would like to see a maximum of four meetings per year, one for the four core areas, each with a focus and "sharing" of materials/ideas.

- These meetings must be quality time. We at our school have split grades, therefore; times must vary. We do not have early dismissal. I hate being late for things and I would be very upset with speeding tickets to make meetings. The last meeting I went to was 40 minutes traveling time – speeding. Hardly worth the hassle.
- I do not think these should ever be mandatory. We have enough to do. We should also not be told what day we should meet. It caused a lot of trouble in our school for the principal to cover all of our classes to meet at the same 3:00 time and every teacher has a split grade.
- What about travel time, etc.?
- Many teachers network informally and I do not see a need for mandatory, "formalized," pre-scheduled networking format.
- Maybe coordinate meeting dates by making it the third Thursday early dismissal of every second month.
- Plenty of notice of meeting dates is crucial. It is also important to notify us of the specific topic being discussed so we can determine whether we wish to attend or have materials we would like to share.
- The problem here is that if you teach combined classes, you cannot be at two meetings at once.
- While the idea of "another" meeting seemed like one more thing to cut into school time, I gained something useful from each meeting I attended.
- I got some good ideas, but it would be nice that the responsibility to host were taken on by more teachers.
- Great idea – instead of reinventing the wheel. Perhaps the ideas generated could be distributed to teachers.
- I would be interested in networking with other "district site" teachers working with special needs.
- I have been very involved in the grade groupings. It has been so helpful.
- With the Grade 3 group, I would like to have it divided into groups of four or five so we can exchange black line masters and/or ideas.
- I feel that each group is best able to determine their own needs.
- Three or four times a year would be good.
- Do not request excessive items for sharing – two or three items are enough.
- I think it is one of the most practical methods of professional development.
- I feel we need to concentrate on getting good teacher networking with a school first. The difficulty with implementing teacher networking is the time factor. Teachers already feel they have many meetings and maybe feel that what they get out of them will not warrant the extra time given to it.
- What about Counsellor/Administrator Networking? It can be lonely in these positions.
- I think this is great, but should be optional as time constraints and special events do arise. As professionals we need to make this our own priority.
- Optional sharing would create the atmosphere most encouraging and conducive to sharing.
- I have found it valuable to meet and share ideas with colleagues. If it were to be mandatory I do not think the same feelings would persist.

- Networking and sharing can never be mandatory to be effective. This is something done out of an enthusiastic and generous heart. When excitement turns into requirement, the same calibre will not be in evidence. There needs to be a basis to establish friendship and trust. Then networking can flourish.
- I am not interested in teacher networking.
- Useful time needs to be well focused. A specific topic in a particular subject area in a division. Several choices facilitate the use of time.
- This is extra time no matter how worthwhile.

I am quite impressed with the survey responses. Ten out of thirteen schools responded. I expected a bit of resistance. What does this say? I think it speaks to the seriousness of what is being proposed. Getting the results back to the principals and teachers, in addition to establishing the steering committee as soon as possible, is crucial. The success of what happens will have a lot to do with making the sessions productive in order for teachers to see the merit--but it cannot take too much time. Time must be used efficiently. Somehow I have to keep the "Work Smarter, Not Harder" motto in place (Journal Entry, May 5, 1998).

I took the positive comments and persisted with them so as not to become discouraged, once again. At the same time I become aware of having to adapt my original expectations to fit with the traditional professional development story. I wrote about using time efficiently. As I think about what that means, I realize this represented the beginning of being aware of having to make the teacher networking sessions more productive. I found myself, like so often in the past, balancing between what I felt I, along with other teachers, needed, with what was coming down the conduit. As I wrote around this journal entry, I realized the sacred story was influencing me.

Not long after compiling the results, I encountered the following event, reminding me of the strength of the sacred story on the professional knowledge landscape. I would learn to ride the wave of enthusiasm next to disappointment and what I came to know as setbacks in creating a competing professional development story. The lesson I learned from the following entry is that there are many ways of knowing.

I can still feel the frustration I felt today during the staff meeting when Michelle, a colleague in my school, was lamenting over the fact that the consultants (experts downtown) are not preparing a list of things to do at the beginning of the year. Then someone else complained that the Trustees, therefore the public, do not respect teachers. That is when I decided enough was enough and I asked how many in the room respected themselves as teachers. I was hearing requests for the experts to make a package/recipe they could follow. Earlier I tried to explain how we, as experienced teachers, have that information. If, at the teacher networking groups, we pool that knowledge the learning process would be so much richer. The power to make positive changes does exist within each of us, but cannot happen unless we choose to exchange our experiences. Then Michelle had the audacity to complain that she does not have a checklist outlining the required jobs to begin the start of next year. She has been teaching for eight years and she needs a checklist to tell her what her role is? What next (Journal Entry, May 8, 1998)?

Looking back on this entry now, almost two years later, I think perhaps Michelle required more support than I recognized at the time. I was being critical without being supportive. I now realize there was room for both of us on the professional knowledge landscape. Hopefully, we could and did learn from each other as we shared experiences!

Just before the year ended, I was able to bring together the first host teachers from each grade level.

Notes After Steering Committee Meeting

(Six host teachers at the meeting)

- *Need convergent thinking – What is working? What is new?*
- *Grade 3s talked about the importance of spelling boards and how they are making a difference.*
- *Principal perceptions – it is okay to teach to tests because achievement is the goal.*

As I reflected on what I gleaned from the steering committee I was concerned. How could I change the focus of what was being discussed in grade groupings when teachers were trying to meet the administrators' agenda? When I heard everyone had to have a word wall, I immediately sensed a sacred story being lived. Not that I saw anything wrong with spelling word walls, but I wondered when teachers would have a chance to share spelling concerns and successes. I wondered if I had to ask to work with principals too? Should they have been listing the benefits they see for teacher networking so I knew what the real agenda was behind their support for teacher networking? Should I have brought in a couple of articles for them to dialogue about? At the same time I wondered if they would read the articles (Journal Entry, May 8, 1998).

I heard different stories about teacher networking experiences for every grade level at the steering committee meeting and in conversations with different teacher participants I happened to speak to in other places on the educational landscape. For example, the administrators advised the Grade 6 teachers to use the teacher networking time to develop unit exams. The host teacher, also the representative on the steering committee, assumed he had to follow the directions from the principals so that is what they did during their first teaching networking session. Grades 1, 2, and 3 teachers decided to rotate where the meetings were held so the host teacher could explain her or his teaching program to the others in the group. This was more in line with what I hoped for in establishing teacher networking compared to what happened in the Grade 6 group. In sharing one's classroom space, as the grades 1, 2, and 3 groups chose, each teacher had an opportunity to tell a story about themselves as teachers living in the classroom space. Only two Grade 4 teachers attended so they went to the computer room to share ideas on how to best meet the technology curriculum needs of Grade 4s.

Summary of Year One

I barely survived the first year of implementing a competing professional development story. I was more afraid of the outcome at the end of the year of teacher networking than when I began. I always dreamed of being in dialogue with other teachers. After the first year of teacher networking, I had only created more questions and wonders about the feasibility of implementing a competing professional development story on the professional knowledge landscape. One day I was excited about what I was learning about my own teacher identity and the next questioning why I felt like I was only one of a few teachers who needed to live a different professional development story. Before we began teacher networking I was enthusiastic about both the process and outcome. After the first year, I became concerned about the logistics of both the process and outcome as I immersed myself in the role of participant and facilitator. I knew that change takes time and yet I wanted teacher networking to become an alternative professional development story as quickly as possible.

During the last joint professional development planning session meeting of the year, three early dismissal dates for the second year of teacher networking were chosen. During that same meeting, after looking at the survey results, it was decided that teacher networking would not become mandatory for all teachers in Area Three. My secret hope was that more teachers would decide to participate in the sessions. More importantly, I hoped it would be a decision on each teacher's part and not a directive from the principals.

One of the other tasks of the joint planning development committee was to determine the joint professional development day format for January of that year. I was determined not to be too assertive during the joint planning meeting. The wheels were in motion for teacher networking to occur three times throughout the year. What more could I expect? It seemed more than I anticipated and feared at the same time.

Just before the joint professional day planning session, my principal approached me to see if I would consider speaking to the concept of teacher networking at the next joint professional day in January. During the conversation it became apparent that, with that offer, I was to recommend to the next joint professional development committee meeting that we invite Alberta's Lieutenant Governor, Lois Hole, to be the keynote speaker. It had already been decided we would not have a scheduled time for teacher networking during the joint professional day, but that time would be allotted for teacher networking on the early Thursday dismissal the night before instead.

I wondered how I had become the messenger to preserve the sacred story. It was the same dilemma I so often felt during the first year. That is the dilemma of believing I was creating a competing professional development story only to realize I was recreating the sacred story as a plotline within the competing story. Memories from my first presentation to the principals began to surface. Was I the messenger of the rhetoric of conclusions delivered in a different language to create an illusion of teachers using their voices? Coming to understand the dilemma did not erase the circumstances in which I found myself. Feeling I had no recourse, I suggested a short presentation of 30 minutes followed by a grade level scavenger hunt. I realized I had to become creative or else the sacred story of being addressed lecture style would win out once again. I wanted all Area Three teachers to have an opportunity to get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere. I was determined to find ways to work around the newly created dilemma. I would not give up my desire to create opportunities for teachers to feel comfortable in honouring their personal practical knowledge. Not yet, anyway.

Searching for Answers Off the School Landscape

Being both a participant and facilitator, who was working toward implementing teacher networking on 13 school landscapes, teaching full-time, and taking a second university class in the fall of 1998 was not enough for me. I decided to live on another educational landscape that fall. I applied to, and was accepted into, a "Leadership Training" course along with 40 other aspiring principals from my district. The class was very demanding with graded assignments. As I write this research I am pleased that I have two journals of data from very different educational landscapes regarding implementing teacher networking as a competing story of professional development.

On the other hand, I have to wonder about the real reason for pushing so hard to be accepted into a position of leadership when I saw myself moving onto the margins of the sacred story of professional development. In some ways I was pushing the boundaries in a place where the rhetoric of conclusions was the strongest on the educational landscape. I wanted to know how teacher networking was perceived further up the conduit and to do that I needed to live in that space.

I also wonder if I was deluding myself, once again, by positioning myself on another educational landscape. Was I trying to keep myself busy so as not to really feel the frustrations of having to live a life on the professional knowledge landscape that did not fit with my teacher identity? Was I hiding my feelings of needing to belong?

Reading my journal entries for the leadership training reminded me of the frustrations on one hand, and determination on the other, I felt toward teacher networking. I used my journal to work through the feelings I experienced with those who would some day be leaders in the district wondering, at the same time, how I ever managed to be accepted to participate. This is reflected in some of the entries I made at this time.

I lived with the secret stories my mother told in the safety in our home. Could that be why my story of what it means to be a teacher is sometimes in conflict with what comes down the conduit or is this what other teachers experience, too, but are afraid to voice (Journal Entry, November 7, 1998)?

I believe the answer to both questions was a resounding yes. That would explain why the tone and content changed from one session to another in my grade level group in the first year of teacher networking. Perhaps the teachers who attended the session in February were caught off guard and did not believe, as I hoped was possible, they were in a safe place on the educational landscape. Unfortunately, these same feelings of comfort did not appear during the session in April.

In a later entry, I compared what I learned in the leadership training class to what I experienced in relation in trying to implement teacher networking for teachers in the classroom.

I now understand where the term "dialogue" came from when the principals mentioned that was what the Superintendent felt was necessary for teachers. It is a part of organizational learning in the business world (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994). In dialoguing about what organizational learning environments look like, new principals would have a better understanding of how they are part of the environment. The discussion with Alex from the research class and the readings from the leadership training class are helping to make my research puzzle clearer. When I meet with the principals, I can use the terms they have been hearing filter down the conduit. Hopefully they will be able to make the necessary connections to envision why their support and encouragement for teacher reflection and dialogue is so very crucial in creating learning environments for all (Journal Entry, November 10, 1998).

This entry confirmed what I began to suspect from the day I received permission to implement teacher networking. The principals realized the language of dialogue was accepted higher up the conduit. In fact, they were happy the idea to implement teacher networking came from a teacher. They did not have to introduce another top-down initiative. I introduced dialogue for them. Looking back now, I wished I had determined what dialoguing really meant for those higher up the conduit before I so willingly reinforced the sacred story.

I remember how frustrated I was last Saturday working with the leadership participants on results statements. I wanted to include a statement on increasing teacher *networking as a goal. "Impossible," I was told and yet, I felt it was necessary to create these kinds of opportunities. Ultimately achievement levels would increase. I can easily see how my thinking about making teacher networking a goal would not work. Teacher networking is a strategy. I knew this then, but for some reason I was stuck on the idea of demonstrating just how important teacher networking was and for that reason it became a goal to work toward, in my mind at least. I am over that now, except to say that teacher networking or collaboration is a very powerful strategy from which to meet many goals. Providing time for collaboration cannot be overestimated. Collaboration at all stages of setting up and sustaining a professional learning community is crucial. Perhaps, having said this, when collaboration becomes commonplace in our schools it will not have to be stated as a strategy, but as a given (Leadership Training Journal Entry, December 29, 1998)!*

The comment written in the margin of my journal by the facilitator made me feel confident that I had made somewhat of a difference in her thinking. The comment she made was, "I agree. Perhaps it is essential to achieving any of our goals." The leadership training landscape provided a very different space, compared to the university class, from which to examine my desire to create places for teachers to dialogue. Often finding myself in a different space compared to the participants in the leadership training, I tried to understand how it was that I desired a different story of professional development and therefore did not fit the leadership profile my classmates emulated.

I did not move into a position of leadership at the end of the course, but I am hopeful I made a difference further up the conduit through my journal entries and comments to those who will one day be leaders within the district! More importantly, I learned more about why I needed to pursue teacher networking as a competing professional development story on the educational landscape by journaling about the very different spaces and my place within each space.

Returning to the School Landscape

The leadership training represented one aspect of my life on the educational landscape. Teacher networking was scheduled into three Thursday early dismissal professional development days throughout the next year. I should have been elated. Instead, I waited, watched, listened, and wrote in my journal as the year proceeded.

> *I worry about teachers not endorsing teacher networking. I do not mean they did not say, in the survey, "Go ahead, it is a great concept." Rather I get the sense that the teachers felt it was another mandated project they were expected to go along with which brings me to my second concern. Does the district really believe in collaboration and reflection? It seems to me that reiterating more than the words in front of huge audiences needs to occur. One of the places to start with my research is certainly with principals.*
>
> *Is it important to have a plan in place? I worry about the principals having too much influence. Perhaps sharing questions with the steering committee members will bring some consensus to the groups in determining what is accomplished. I do not want teacher networking to be lost because it did not have enough structure for the teachers: and yet I am worried about the principals directing the structure. There is a fine balance between having an agenda and having a sense of direction without a specific agenda. That is why I need to bring the steering committee together to determine how we can have discussions about what is important to the individual grade group with purpose (Journal Entry, October 16, 1998).*

This has been a very busy week for teacher networking. I have learned to carry my journal everywhere. For starters, I had a steering committee meeting on Wednesday after school. I had a steering committee meeting because I was worried how to ensure teachers felt their time was being used during the networking sessions. I put the question out to the committee and received some very interesting responses--some which calmed my fears, others made me think more deeply about my own teaching. The Grade 6 teacher, George, talked about the success he had with the group last year when teachers shared what was working and not working in each of the core subject areas. Experienced teachers, according to George, came away feeling they assisted newer teachers with their knowledge. Others realized what they were doing was new to others. George's analysis of his experience and that of his group was very encouraging for me. That is exactly what I had hoped would happen. I think it helped that other members of the steering committee talked about the attendance barriers. Together, we began to examine the possibilities of meeting in grade groups in another way. The steering committee decided on a compromise. That was to have the topic "Assessment Tools for Language Arts" in preparation for the fall reporting period to encourage more teachers to attend the next session. Although I am somewhat encouraged by the direction the steering committee is taking, I realize we need the administrators in our discussions. The administrators wanted teacher networking, but I believe what the administrators envisioned as teacher networking is very different from what the steering committee and many teachers see as the benefits. My thoughts, at the end of the meeting, turned to the administrators. What were they doing on these Thursdays? Perhaps they, too, need to meet and discuss how they could assist the teacher networking process. Unfortunately, they missed George's *story. I think (actually hope) an administrator would have taken George's story back to the administrators (Journal Entry, October 19, 1998).*

My thoughts regarding the teacher networking process fluctuated depending on where I was situated on the educational landscape. In this journal entry I wrote about the concern I had regarding principal involvement, or should I say lack of involvement. I found myself asking, "Do principals really know what is important to teachers' lives in the classroom?" On the other hand, would teachers have been comfortable with their presence? Would the teachers who participated have told the same stories had the principals been present?

As I wrote how beneficial it would have been for the principals to hear George's story, I began to understand how important it was for principals to be involved and not involved at the same time. I felt principals needed to acknowledge, not judge, teacher stories. I wondered about inviting principal participation at the steering committee level, but worried that individual teachers would not feel safe.

Part of my own story at that time included the story of the principal as the evaluator theme. It was very clear to me that a principal felt compelled to enter my classroom to judge my teaching ability. I have a photograph taken of me in front of my class during an evaluation by my principal at this time. I can feel the tightness in my shoulders, neck, and face muscles at the moment this picture was taken. Looking back on this photograph a year later, confirmed my need to look more closely at who I had become over the years of trying to fit into a system that did not honour my teacher knowledge.

My story of being evaluated by the principal influenced my determination to work with principals to help them become aware of the stories that influenced the kinds of decisions teachers felt compelled to make in the classrooms. I struggled with how to balance my need to bring principals into the dialogue and my own fear of being judged as a competent teacher in the process.

In many ways it was through the writing of my own story that brought me to question my hope as an educator at the end of the second year. Sometimes I was more participant than facilitator. This allowed me to reap the benefits of creating a space in which to reflect on my teacher knowledge. Several journal entries, like the following one, demonstrate how I moved back and forth between the roles of participant, facilitator, and researcher during this time.

Perhaps I, too, should have a word board. Currently, I teach spelling in connection to being able to communicate effectively in the context of what we are working on. We look at spelling as part of the editing process using a variety of tools. This came after reflecting on my class journal. I find myself writing after segments of class as a more natural occurrence after reading and dialoguing in both the university and leadership training class. I am beginning to think my inner sense of being a teacher has been more a transmitter of knowledge in the past. This revelation gives me energy to go on because now I see my role as an educator as much more than a purveyor of skills and knowledge (Journal Entry, October 13, 1998).

Questioning how much of the sacred story I had embedded within, helped me to understand how my teacher identity became somewhat fragmented over the years. I had begun to betray the teacher identity I developed so very long ago at the age of five in my very first classroom, my bedroom, when I shared my experiences with my mom, dad, and babysitter.

Attempting to understand how to create conditions for other teachers to eventually see the merit in teacher networking took a lot of energy at this time. It was difficult to maintain my focus when I heard how difficult it was to attend the sessions. I felt I had to do something different so teachers could benefit from the time spent dialoguing. I remember now, with some horror, how I put teachers into two categories: those who seemed to need to dialogue and those who needed a consultant, checklist, or guide to inform their teaching. I thought, at the time, this might help me understand why some teachers chose not to attend teacher networking. I thought I might glean, from the differences and similarities between the two, how to create the necessary conditions for teacher networking to become a place of rejuvenation and creation of new ways of knowing how to deal with the changes coming down the conduit.

My field notes remind me of a comment made to me early in my real teaching career. That is, the more you know, the more you realize how difficult it is to change things. My journal entries revealed issues of teacher isolation, lack of meaning in both decision-making and contribution to the profession, lack of time to reflect and plan, and fear as obstacles in the way of living a competing professional development story.

My frustration is not having my voice heard. My frustration is in working with others who have given up, personally and professionally. Life happens to them. It seems there is little meaning in their lives. They are into blaming others for their frustrations. Most teachers appear to be dissatisfied in their input in district level decisions and recognition for contributions. Is this something I can address with principals? How can *we get teachers to have a shared vision when teachers do not feel like what they do outside the classroom makes a difference? Teachers are very isolated. Therefore, I am convinced that I must begin the dialogue within the principal group and work simultaneously with their perceptions as much as, if not more than, with teachers at this point.*

Teachers appear to be fearful to collect data from their classrooms to examine what happens next. I keep hearing, "They do not care. I've already done that." Are we afraid to talk about how we teach writing because many of us are teaching the way we were taught how to write (Journal Entry, November 16, 1998)?

This was a paradoxical time for me. On the one hand, I was meeting with frustrations and wonders that made me question what I was trying to accomplish by creating a competing professional development story. On the other hand, my enthusiasm was reinforced by the reading and dialogue I was experiencing on the university landscape. Various articles resonated with my desire to create supportive places for teachers to scaffold understanding and experiences to meet the diverse needs of students in our classes. I maintained my momentum by reading articles and participating in discussions off the district landscape and, although there were many times I questioned my motives, I refused to give up.

Reading *Classroom Voices, Language-Based Learning in the Elementary School* by Booth (1994) during the fall of that year reminded me I had to persevere. Booth told a story of working with teachers in a school and how difficult it was to see results and not give up. That explained exactly what I was experiencing. I refused to admit that teacher networking would not some day become an alternative professional development story for educators everywhere. During the next journal entry, after reflecting on Booth's experiences juxtaposed next to my own, I wrote,

> *My frustrations, often, have been with the feeling that I am always skimming the surface. I believe that this is a common feeling for educators. Not only are we skimming the surface with curriculum to cover everything, we only have so much time to digest what is written as policy. This leaves little time to put policy into some sort of practice demonstrating, through measurable outcomes, that a majority of the students understood or could perform a skill. The result is that learning is often stilted or at best marginal. There is little time for critical or creative thinking by either the students or teachers. Teachers are constantly running on what I have come to think of as a treadmill. We hope the experts who write the curriculum take into consideration scaffolding from one level to the next because we can barely keep up with the changes. We keep the façade of being in control by working toward reaching objectives. We teach to what is being tested. We cringe awaiting the results of the district or provincial tests. We feel badly that we do not have the time to really get to know our students. We feel like we are only doing half a job. Yet we know that humanly it is not possible to do more. We do not talk openly about our frustrations on the educational landscape, lest someone think we are not capable. How do I make the sessions productive for teachers, not administrative mandates (Journal Entry, October 18, 1998)?*

Two days later I gained the courage to go to an administrator to ask to make a second presentation to the principal group. My journal entry from this day sums up my concerns and determination to address one of the very difficult dichotomies I was living.

I stressed the importance of having support from the principals for this initiative, the importance of having common purposes for networking, and lastly my personal reason to use the discussions with the principals for my Master's thesis. She agreed and asked me to put my proposal in writing. A victory for both the networking and my research! My plan is to meet the first time and dialogue about what they see as the purpose and their role in teacher networking. After meeting with them the first time I will give them the article by Darling-Hammond (1998) and then during the second meeting will have the same discussion to see how their perceptions may have changed. The third meeting will be after teachers have had a few more times to meet. Hearing from their teachers and dialoguing about the research in this area should help to clear up the misconceptions of using teacher networking to amplify the sacred story of professional development (Journal Entry, October 20, 1998).

In the end, I only addressed the principals on the one occasion. I left the articles I hoped would become discussion points for the next meeting with the principals, but I was never invited back. Although I was disappointed, by this time I was getting used to living the paradox of being told collaboration was necessary, but only as a means to continue the sacred story. In other words, dialogue was necessary, but only if dialogue resulted in knowing more about the sacred story of how to increase achievement results.

In the meantime, bringing together the original steering committee members to plan became more difficult.

I am trying to organize the teacher networking steering committee to reflect on how to make the sessions more useful for teachers. This is not as easy as it would seem. Today when I called over half of those on the steering committee and suggested we meet *over dinner, the response was disappointing. Without the two teachers from my school, I would think I was crazy. Why is this so difficult? Why do I feel like I am pulling my teeth out, one by one, instead of attempting to get professionals to talk about their practice? Maybe it is too soon to be getting down. It has only been a little over a year. Change takes a long time. On the other hand, it feels like I am being avoided because of my determination to make teacher networking a reality. Maybe I've grown two heads (Journal Entry, December 12, 1998).*

I decided to give up trying to bring together the steering committee. After-school meetings were out of the question because the time was required for classroom planning. Dinner meetings were out of the question for a number of the women because they had responsibilities at home. I decided to concentrate on preparing the scavenger hunt for the January Professional Day introductory session.

`I spent so much time thinking, writing, and planning what to say and now, as I walk up to the podium at 4:30, teachers are leaving. Looking out into the sea of faces I realize, with a sinking feeling, I was living the rhetoric of conclusions. Nothing had changed. Teachers were leaving before the scavenger hunt even began. I had worked so hard to plan an event for teachers so they might feel more comfortable participating in tomorrow's networking session (Remembered Story, January 28,1999)!`

When we finally did start the scavenger hunt there were only a handful of teachers, many of whom I recognized as advocates for teacher networking. I had desperately hoped teachers would have an opportunity to build relationships with each other during the scavenger hunt. I wanted to change the focus of the professional development time. I envisioned time for teachers to have an opportunity to meet with friends after the scavenger hunt. I desperately wanted teachers to have time for both the scavenger hunt and to visit with each other. Not only had we packed too many activities into the two hours, having an expert speak reiterated the sacred story of professional development. I thought about the teachers who left after the inspirational speaker who did not speak to a single soul during the hour. I also think back to September of that year, when I helped to create this story by agreeing to have an inspirational speaker before we had a chance to be in relationship with one another. I helped to create the rhetoric of conclusions that we all continued to live on the professional knowledge landscape.

Finding Some Comfort from My Efforts

At the end of the second year of teacher networking, I was content with having found four other Grade 4 teachers interested in sharing classroom experiences. The last session, held in May of that year, found us discussing how best to teach division in the new math curriculum. We had a few laughs as we remembered how we each learned to divide and in the process shared experiences that resonated with our students in each of our classes. I was ending the second year of teacher networking on a personal high because I found a group of teachers with whom I could share classroom experiences. That was not the case for teacher networking in general, but I realize now I had to celebrate the success I was able to achieve in order to survive.

Sitting in the last staff development workshop of the year with teachers from my school, I decided I would have to be content not only with what I accomplished, but with returning to celebrating the accomplishments in my classroom with my students.

New Insights After Two Years

During my second research class, I had to write three separate stories. The second part of the assignment, given after the three stories were shared with peers, was to look for threads of similarities within all three stories. One of the major threads in all three of my stories was the importance of relationship. Relationship in each of the stories made each individual accountable for oneself and others in a way that allowed everyone to be their best or reach their potential in a particular situation. Secondary threads wove throughout the relationship theme. Support and encouragement were strong in all three stories where a problem was being solved through dialogue. These themes were themes I hoped to create in teacher networking.

In rereading my journal entries, I am amazed at the different directions my thinking took along the way. For example, during a meeting of the Education Society on December 9, 1996, I had a very interesting discussion with a fellow retired teacher who had done some work on co-operative group work as a student learning strategy. I remember well that evening when he told me that a good number of the students were asking higher order questions and using more critical thinking strategies, but that a large number of the teachers involved in the project abandoned co-operative strategies because management issues arose quickly for many of the teachers. I believe management issues arose not because the students were off task, but because the students were more vocal. In other words, they were gaining a voice that was harder to control. I wondered about the implications this would have for teacher networking.

The second year of teacher networking did eventually end, with me resigning myself to the fact that I would have to be content with the small steps I was able to make in creating a competing professional development story. I experienced dialogue with three other Grade 4 colleagues. Whether teacher networking continued on the professional knowledge landscape was out of my control. I decided in order to survive I had to concentrate on creating possibilities for my students instead of worrying about other teachers. I decided I needed to let the competing professional development story take its own course without my intervention. I would not advocate for its inclusion in the third and final joint professional development day.

Notebook III – The Experience of Making Hope Visible

> By reflecting on the moments
> that have left an unquestionable impression on us,
> we can begin to see a pattern that is the personal story
> of how hope has been born,
> challenged, assaulted and enhanced
> throughout our lives. (Jevne, 1994, p. 9)

Just when I thought all was lost, I discovered the work of Greene (1995). "When, however, a person chooses to view himself or herself in the midst of things, as beginner or explorer, and has the imagination to envisage new things emerging, more and more begins to seem possible" (Greene, 1995, p. 22). Immediately after reading this quote, I began to write about imagining possibilities even though I was feeling sad about the fate of teacher networking. Teacher networking remained very much a central component of my journaling. I wondered why I appeared to be the only frustrated teacher as teacher networking slowly dropped from the language of Area Three professional knowledge landscapes.

What I am more concerned about is why do some imagine and some refuse to think beyond what is happening in the moment. How do we convince others to see the possibilities of imagination? I am thinking about some phrases I have been hearing like, "We need a consultant, these kids will never . . . We'll never get parents to . . ." (Journal Entry, May, 11, 1999)

Even though I was no longer concentrating on creating opportunities for teachers to imagine new possibilities, I continued to think about teachers. I realized once again I would have to retreat into my classroom in order to create the knowledge required to make a difference in students' lives. Therefore, I decided to expend my energy in the classroom where I felt I would make the most difference.

How can I get my students to ask questions? How do I get them to imagine from those questions? Will having a dialogue with my students in their response journals after reading make a difference? I think one way is to have them pull out their response journals more often during the day (Journal Entry, May 17, 1999).

Questioning my Hope as an Educator

I began to reread my field notes. I was living the frustration of not knowing what to do and questioning my own and everyone else's motives on the professional knowledge landscape. Writing continued to be a vehicle from which to move my difficult thinking forward. One idea led to another and then another until I was comfortable knowing what to do next. Most often, the ideas came in the form of questions. Before I was able to answer the original question, I would have another question to ponder. In that way my writing informed my coming to know what I had to do along the way. I wondered about my students' hope and despair although it would be two years before I understood what the delicate balance between the two meant in relation to my personal practical knowledge.

Reading work by Greene (1995) and Bruner (1986) after deciding to give up on implementing teacher networking only served to reinforce my original convictions regarding the importance of creating meaning in one's life through dialogue. At the same time, their work helped me to understand why the sacred story of theory-driven practice was so very strong on the educational landscape.

> A mode of schooling in which one "figures out things for oneself" changes one's conception of oneself and one's role, and also undermines the role of authority that exists generally within the culture, even to the point of being marked by modes of address reserved for those in authority.
> (Bruner, 1986, p.131)

Greene (1995) and Bruner (1986) encouraged me to think harder about the different places individuals lived on the educational landscape as the rhetoric of conclusions came down the metaphoric conduit. For example, it seemed that the principals felt they had to orchestrate teacher networking events differently than I envisioned because of their different position on the educational landscape. They appeared to need to control the process but, more importantly, also control the outcome of the dialogue that occurred in the teacher networking sessions. It felt like they needed to know teachers were being productive within certain parameters.

I believe that the principals see themselves as having to provide the questions for teachers. Just last week I was reminded again that we would have to have questions for the teachers. Are the principals afraid of what will be discussed (created) or imagined? Is it a control issue or do they not have the faith that we will discuss what is important (Journal Entry, May 27, 1999)?

Juxtaposing my frustrations next to work like Bruner's (1986) and Greene's (1995) in the larger educational context, provided me with a better sense of how difficult teacher networking must have been for the principals. I wondered if they could see the benefits, but were afraid of the consequences at the same time. Critical thinking might have been the rhetoric of conclusions coming down the conduit, but critical thinking without parameters encouraged other possibilities. Principals were positioned to honour the sacred story that preserved the existing knowledge and authority base and yet principals must have known that in order for students to become critical thinkers, teachers also had to experience the process of critical thinking. Did they compromise by creating the conditions and boundaries for dialoguing? Perhaps compromising was the only way they could resolve the dilemma of having teachers think critically without creating what they envisioned as chaos on the educational landscape. Chaos would result from a variety of strong voices challenging the existing knowledge and authority of those making decisions higher up the conduit.

Perhaps the principals felt as teachers gained courage within the safe places and spaces of teacher networking to speak out about their experiences, teachers might be encouraged to use their voices in other places. Questioning one's experiences instead of accepting an expert's voice would create a very different atmosphere on the whole educational landscape. Perhaps teachers would eventually question the directives coming down the conduit. If that happened, who would be in charge?

As I began to put more pieces of the puzzle together in relation to principal involvement with teacher networking, I also strove to understand my own desire to create places on the professional knowledge landscape where critical thinking was both accepted and encouraged.

What do I want? I want to be in charge of my own destiny. I want to challenge and be challenged about the way things are done. I want to be motivated to make a difference in individual lives. I want meaning in my own life. Meaning, meaning, meaning. What is that? What, as I sit here and listen to the traffic, does that mean?

Perhaps I will find a place to work where I can hear the real questions and answers. I want to hear all the voices. When my students look at me I want them to know I care in a way that lets them know that we all have to be responsible. We cannot let others make decisions for us.

This is perhaps the first time I have almost felt like there is no hope.

What makes a difference in our lives?

What gives us hope?

Students, teachers, parents.

What gives me hope?

What am I trying to find out?

I want to reinvent the passion--to discover why I teach, why I want to be with learners, why others teach and how they know what is important (Journal Entry, May 30, 1999).

I remember reiterating how hopeless I felt after writing entries, like the one above, to Dr. Clandinin, my thesis advisor. I commented on how my hope was in question without really thinking about what that meant. It was the first time I acknowledged and connected the important role hope played in my identity as a teacher. It was Dr. Clandinin who brought hope to the forefront of my thinking on that day. She recognized my need to examine my hope in relation to choosing to attempt to implement teacher networking. Dr. Clandinin suggested I enrol in the "Hope and the Helping Relationship" class for the summer of 1999.

Finding a Place From Which to Begin to Understand My Hope as An Educator

All was well. I had a plan and felt I could manage. That was until the evening before the course began. I panicked. What did I really know about hope? After all, serious adversity had not presented itself in my life. I, or those closest to me, did not have a debilitating or life threatening illness. I was sure all the other participants had reasons for needing to enrol in the class. I enrolled because Dr. Clandinin recommended it. The only recourse I had, at that late hour, was the dictionary. The next morning I walked into the class filled with uncertainty and fear with the dictionary definition tucked under my arm for security.

As I attempted to answer the first of four questions assigned after the first class, I began to think about my hope in relation to my life on the school landscape.

What prompted me to take this course?

I realized over the past three months, since embarking on my Master's, I was confronting new fears. After bringing teacher networking to Area Three for the last two years, I was beginning to lose hope in my ability to make a difference in teachers gaining a voice. I started thinking about individual teachers and groups of teachers who would confront me with statements like, "What's the difference? I do not have time. I'm too busy trying to maintain teaching the curriculum. Just tell me what to do." The more I thought about it, the more I began to wonder about the hopefulness of teachers to be passionate about teaching as opposed to being puppets on a string. I wondered about the sacred stories in relation to the competing story I was attempting to implement. The horrifying realization that my voice was starting to diminish for the first time since I began teaching made me question my own hopefulness regarding my lifelong passion of being an educator. Have teachers lost hope in their capacity to participate in meaningful dialogue? Perhaps it is not as serious as a loss of hope.

Then there are my own personal questions regarding my hopefulness. What makes me hopeful? For the first time in 42 years, I have been reflecting on my determination to continue to develop my passions. I am, by no means, in an adverse situation. On the contrary, I have a life full of possibilities. In fact, there are those who have indicated their envy regarding my ability to create opportunities for myself--to find the silver lining in the clouds. I am not a religious person, however I know I do not have ultimate control. My ability to remain hopeful is in question, but I believe that my attitudes and beliefs will assist me in remaining open to hope--hope in the sense of learning to be a better person in the face of real adversity (Journal Entry, July 5, 1999).

I found myself immersed in a new and very different place and space from which to examine hope as I continued to reflect, write, and dialogue in the class around the hope theory we learned. I do not remember how I came to write the following poem exactly, but I do remember new questions coming to the surface as I allowed myself to live in the moment with my feelings.

What if
I could learn to set out into the land of no control?
What if
I could be still long enough to be appreciated for the real me?
What if
I did not joke and pretend things were all right?
What if
I went dancing with Bart once a month instead of being afraid to waste time?

What if

I did not try to change the whole world and instead concentrated on why I fell in love with this one?

What if

I acted instead of stepping lightly first to see if it was meeting with approval?

What if

I questioned more and answered less?

What if

I accepted that some things are not worth pursuing?

What if

I went to the beach without a pen or a book?

What if

I could not answer any of the "what if" questions in my life?

There was a lot to learn about hope and I only had three weeks. Within the three weeks, I began to think about my hope in relation to my experiences with teacher networking. As I was learning about hope theory, hope focused-counselling, and hope research it was Roset's (1999) work that provided some of the background on hope in relation to the concept of teacher networking as I envisioned it. Although Roset provided a comprehensive summary of hope in a variety of contexts, both on and off the educational landscape, her summary of contemporary writers commenting on hope in relation to those on the educational landscape caught my attention.

> Teachers' sense of optimism, hope, and commitment stem from workplace conditions that enable them to feel "professionally empowered and self-

> fulfilled, that keep them from reaching for new teaching challenges, fresh opportunities, and ever-expanding technical knowledge" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 165). However, Sarason's (1993a) research shows that teachers view themselves as powerless, unchallenged intellectually, and isolated. Teachers feel overburdened and overwhelmed with the responsibilities of student needs and pressures to raise achievement scores. Hopeless teachers regard themselves as undervalued, misunderstood, and unfairly criticized. (p. 243)

This quote, embedded within her thesis, spoke to what I was feeling after two years of attempting to create teacher networking opportunities. Reading this quote convinced me there had to be a connection between my hope and my desire to be in dialogue to create meaning from my experiences on the educational landscape. As I began to think about my experiences in teacher networking in relation to hope, I knew I had discovered a critical juncture that would change the way I saw myself as a teacher in the past, present, and future. Once again, I wrote to understand.

Teaching is, for many, a very lonely profession. Encouraging teachers to participate in small teacher networking groups where they would not be judged or reported for their comments makes dialogue possible and creates opportunities for authentic relationships to be formed where support for one another can be enhanced. I think hearing other teachers' stories of similar frustrations or ways of finally overcoming a similar difficulty can be very energizing. Realizing that one is not alone or experiencing a particular difficulty, can also build and sustain hope. It is interesting to note that in all three groups (healthy, transitional, and psychological) within the long-term disability *study conducted in Striving for Health: Living with Broken Dreams "working with colleagues" was in the top four teaching issues that were most satisfying of all issues in teaching (Jevne & Zingle, n.d., p. 201).*

Creating opportunities for authentic relationships where teachers feel a sense of belonging helps to create meaning and purpose for teachers. The second most important issue, out of 13 factors, was that teachers needed to feel a sense of "involvement in decision-making at school" (Jevne & Zingle, n.d., p. 197). Continually being told how and what to teach by individuals who have not been in the classroom for 20 or more years can be demoralizing. Teachers spend a lot of time keeping up with curriculum changes and having to take on increasing diversity of roles. Becoming aware of the dynamics of one's personal pactical knowledge creates additional meaning, hence hope. Seeing oneself as creating opportunities for students as opposed to believing what happens by chance or following guides, adds a dimension to teaching that makes it a craft as opposed to following a recipe (Journal Entry, July 22, 1999).

I learned through my writing and reading during those three weeks that "hope is capable of changing individual lives. It enables individuals to envision a future in which they are willing to participate" (Jevne, 1994, p. 8). I realized the only way to change lives by envisioning a future I was willing to participate in was through dialogue with others who also imagined a better future. I decided I needed to reflect, read, and write with a new purpose to understand my hope on the educational landscape. That meant rereading and writing around previous field texts and creating new field texts to expose new learning regarding my hope as an educator. I realized that in three weeks I had only skimmed the surface of my knowing in relation to my hope as an educator.

Uncovering Past Hopes

I went back to reread my earliest journals looking for hope-related themes or ideas. I was surprised to discover how much I wrote about hope and despair without acknowledging the role it played in my life on the professional knowledge landscape.

As I looked through early journal entries, I noticed how important dialogue, gaining voice, and being connected in relationships was to my teacher identity. An entry from my first journal:

Students should have a chance during the school day to discuss changes they feel are pertinent. . . .at the same time help them see how they can grow. . . (Journal Entry, January 9, 1982).

I envisioned conditions wherein students felt confident in dialoguing to imagine multiple realities (Greene, 1995) in my third year of teaching.

A little further on I commented on my role as an educator instilling hope by assisting students to become responsible for their decisions. This is the first of many entries like this one where I begin to make the association between hope, possibility, and being in the moment.

What I am trying to say is that society is creating hospitals and the like because we aren't helping people make decisions for themselves. No wonder people begin to feel hopeless – they don't know how or what to do when they are down like going for a walk or getting out to see a friend (Journal Entry, February 21, 1982).

This entry speaks to an aspect of hope that I articulated but did not completely understand – that is the relation of hope to the creation of possibilities. Because I was what some would call an opportunist, I was often looked upon as fortunate. I would often correct others saying, "It is not luck, but looking for what is possible." In fact, it was during my first year of teaching that I became much more aware of the role of diet and exercise in my life. I contemplated becoming a nutritionist and fitness advisor, but could not bear the thought of giving up on my dream of being a teacher. Few individuals understood what I meant when I said, "I would like to help individuals make healthy choices in their lives thereby increasing their energy, focus, and meaning in the everyday!" I could have been one of the first personal trainers for those who were not in professional sports in Alberta. At the same time I could not imagine abandoning teaching as a career.

Rereading an entry from my second year of teaching brought more surprises about my early teaching experiences and hope.

I remember coming out of university thinking of the ultimate humanitarian classroom where students learn to find their interests by learning on their own, the teacher being a resource person. I am doing that in my classroom, only in so far as parents and other educators allow, which is not at all enough. There is this attitude that we are there to stuff curriculum into students. But I have been able to overcome some of these barriers because where there is a will there is a way (Journal Entry, February 21, 1982).

I noticed the phrase *where there is a will there is a way* appeared in various forms in my journal entries between the first journals in 1982 and the latter ones before the day in 1999 when I decided to search for hope in my writing. This did not surprise me at first, when I noticed the phrase, because so much of my work as a teacher had been to assist students toward reaching their goals. Yet, my understanding of goal behaviour and hope was vague. If I can be allowed to speculate now, at the time of writing this research text, I would have to say I hoped to create better futures for my students by teaching them skills to attain better circumstances through goal setting behaviours. Goal setting and attainment are integral components of hope (Stotland, 1969; Snyder, 1994).

As I began to write around previous journal entries, I began to see my own hope as having the will and way to reach goals I set for myself. Previously I envisioned my hope as empowering others to reach their goals, in other words, encouraging others to become productive citizens. I would have described my hope as bringing purpose and meaning to life (Frankl, 1959). I derived meaning and purpose in my life as I helped others become productive citizens. I saw my hope as an educator as containing the meaning I derived from my work helping others to, in turn, find meaning in their life. I continue to regard meaning and purpose as a huge component of my hope. My passion to learn and grow as a facilitator of learning holds me hostage in the present as I am drawn into the future personally and professionally. Writing this autobiographical narrative inquiry is just one example. I am writing autobiographical sketches because I need to understand why I did not feel like my purpose was fulfilled as an educator when I did not have any opportunities to create experiential knowledge with other educators on the professional knowledge landscape.

The journal entry dated February 21, 1982 also demonstrated in statements like, "*There is this attitude that we are there to stuff curriculum into students*," that I began to question my hope in relation to my teacher story very early in my teaching career when I thought my hopes and dreams only began to fade in the last few years. My early hopes were affected when I realized, in my third year of teaching, what I needed, to become the teacher I wanted to become, was not possible on the professional knowledge landscape. I can still feel the bitterness of the comment, 20 years later. I gain some solace from, "*There is this attitude.*" Understanding my resolve to be the kind of teacher my mother and Mr. Bently modeled, I have to wonder if the statement was one of resolve to prove those with *the attitude* to be wrong or if I persisted like the children Danielson (1995) described when she cited Lynch (1965) with "each failed hope provides energy for the child to see new hopes" (p. 9).

I located events from my past on the school landscape reinforcing the belief that I could actually make a difference in others' lives. There was the story about the mom who asked me if I would tutor her because she wanted to return to school. I had her son and, later, her daughter as students. She must have trusted me enough to ask me to tutor her. I remember thinking as she read her written composition out loud to me that she trusted my ability to help her do well in her classes. What if I could not make a difference in her life? On the other hand, I knew I had already made a difference because she saw me as someone she could ask to help her create new possibilities for both herself and her children. Then there were the letters, cards, and visits from former students along the way that constantly reinforced my hopefulness in making a difference in others' lives. They helped inform the meaning and purpose I derived from my experiences, maintaining my hopefulness, despite my feelings regarding my inability to make changes on the professional knowledge landscape.

On the other hand, was it that I believed that to be a good teacher I had to pretend that I was hopeful? This makes me wonder about staying in teaching when I was questioning what I was living, especially when the living did not fit. Why did I choose to ignore what I felt and instead of owning up to not fitting, fight so hard to make a fit?

I think backward to the stories that might inform this dilemma. I know that as far back as I can remember I wanted to be a teacher just like my mother. She persevered to make a difference with her students. She never quit because she was frustrated. She worked harder when she was frustrated.

I remember thinking a mother was always a mother, just like a teacher was always a teacher. Similarly, a teacher, like a mother, would not abandon her role easily. My story of teacher and mother was of someone who cared unconditionally. If I left teaching I would have been an uncaring individual. My story of an uncaring individual was as far away as possible from what I believed a teacher was.

As I reread journal entries, pondering their meanings, other memories begin to dance around in my head like the different mentors who perhaps helped to diminish my hopelessness and provide rays of hope like Mr. Bently in the Social Studies 30 class back in Grade 12. I needed to look more closely at how my hope developed in the very early years. It is to those stories that I now turn. The stories we tell about ourselves reveal our hope, whether implicitly or explicitly. "A personal story is inherently laden with thoughts about how we go about pursuing the goals in our life" (Snyder, McDermott, Cook, & Rapoff, 1997, p. 27).

Early Mentors

According to Erikson (1964):

> Hope relies for its beginnings on the new being's first encounter with *trustworthy maternal persons*, who respond to his need for *intake* and

> *contact* with warm and calming envelopment. . . . At the same time the infant develops a greater capacity for renunciation, together the ability to transfer disappointed hopes to better prospects; and he learns to dream what is imaginable and to train his expectations on what promises to prove possible. (pp. 116-117)

It is to my family that I return to find some of the answers (Schacter, 1996) about who I was in relation to my hope as an educator. Of course, two of my earliest hope mentors were my parents. Both provided a space and place for me to feel that my ideas were important. I also knew I could trust their judgment, guidance, and protection. As a result, I was able to feel confident in using my voice to make sense of the environment.

As a family, we worked as a team to accomplish goals and to make our lives better along the way. Our home was a place where we were encouraged to learn new skills, like baking the cakes of our lives. We learned to work the land and to take only what we needed, returning the required nutrients to ensure future crops of vegetables and berries. Seasons also played an important role in our lives. We worked hard as a family preserving food for the winter months.

Our home was a place where friends and extended family members shared stories and imagined different futures around the kitchen table. "High-hope children and adults are able to form strong attachments to other people, and their personal stories reflect their involvement with such people" (Snyder, McDermott, Cook & Rapoff, 1997, p. 12). We both told and heard stories about different ways to reach the goals we desired.

My father provided opportunities to extend our skills through his patient encouragement to take small steps along the way. He listened patiently, asking questions until we found the answers we needed. He bandaged our knees and sent us back out with added strength, knowing he would be there for comfort and support if we fell again. It was not until I revisited memories and stories with my dad that I realized he was the caregiver that taught me to trust my perceptions through quiet reflection in the everyday moments. His strong presence continues to guide me through the difficult moments when I ask myself what I need to do to solve a particular dilemma.

My early perception of my mother was also a very strong one. I saw her as being different from my friends' moms. My mom was one of the few moms who worked outside the home. I saw her as being in charge of her life. She did not have to work; she chose to work at something she loved--being the greatest teacher ever. She took great care to ensure her students felt challenged at their own level. She continually sought ways to increase her knowing about how to challenge both herself and her students in a meaningful way.

My mom was a model I wanted to emulate very much. I wanted to make a difference in students' lives. Although what my mom did in the classroom was of paramount importance, she also saw her role within the community of educators as an important one. She loved to work with other teachers whenever possible, and always had student teachers when they were available. She was also very involved with the Alberta Teachers' Association as a Professional Development Representative for the Northeast region. She worked many evenings and weekends with other teachers to improve education. Being involved with teachers at many different levels created continual growth and satisfaction in being a teacher, but there were frustrations as well. She could not always find teachers interested in her deep quest to know why she did what she did and how to do things better the next time. The comment I often heard was, "Oh, I thought of that a long time ago, but no one would listen to me." As a result, mom talked to me long before I had my first real classroom. My love for the classroom and school landscape grew as I helped mom sort out events. I naturally fell into the role of being a confidant and teaching partner. My vision of what it means to be a teacher was shaped by those long talks and times in the classroom with my mother. Her need to make the world a better place through her work in the classroom and with other teachers became my need.

The deep, rich conversations my mom and I had were much like the conversations we continue to have as a family around the dining room table. Those conversations continue to define my hope to make a difference in the world, but the very early conversations created the initial possibilities I envisioned. As a confident 10-year-old and later student at university, I felt I could question and dream new possibilities at the same time.

In addition to learning this in my immediate family, the expectation to challenge and create a better future through examining possibilities was an outgrowth of what I experienced around the table with my mother's brothers and sisters, three of whom were educators. In a conversation in the fall of 2001, my aunt asked why I chose to write an autobiographical narrative inquiry. I explained to her, "It was partly your influence. As I listened to your combined hope and despair of the varied places and spaces you lived on the educational landscape in the late 1960s and 1970s, I could sense the ongoing creation of new knowledge and teaching selves along the way." I grew to find a place around that table, as I, like the rest of the family who were not real teachers, found their place in the making of knowledge.

During the same conversation, my aunt explained to me, "What happened with us as a family of teachers was really an extension of what I often experienced during lunch and at the end of the day. We did share, with one another, what was happening in our classrooms. Not only did we share, we sometimes offered advice to one another. Sometimes we took the advice, sometimes we did not, but there was a sense of knowing someone else cared about you and what you were experiencing." She went on to explain, "I expect what you were searching for as a teacher was not a figment of your imagination. What we did around the dinner table at home was what your uncle, mom, and I were experiencing in our actual teacher lives at school during that time. I question whether it still exists today!"

My earliest mentors instilled a sense of what I would label constructed knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), created around many dinner tables with my immediate and extended family. I learned how to be a teacher who wondered how to make a difference in relationship with others. Like the many conversations I had with my mother, my family extended my knowing about what it meant to be a teacher.

Non-Family Mentors Along the Way

When I think about the first three principals I worked with, they all have one striking similarity that quite possibly maintained my hopefulness. Each one realized my need to be in relationship with other teachers. All three encouraged me to become involved in committees outside the school setting with other teachers, like myself, from other schools. I brought and organized the integration of the new ideas into our school landscape. I gradually became the lead teacher in our school. Thinking I was in dialogue with teachers from other schools led me to believe I could create a similar kind of professional development opportunity in teacher networking. After my experience in trying to implement what I thought was an opportunity for teachers to actually dialogue, I wonder if my role as lead teacher was one of bringing information down the conduit.

Given the educational climate during this time, it seemed that my principals realized my need to work with other teachers and this is how they could accommodate my need to stay hopeful as an educator. Encouraging me to become a part of the decision-making process at another level provided an outlet for my voice to be used in creating new knowledge and ways of being. Like my mother, I needed a place to discuss possibilities for students, teachers, and for society as a whole. I also needed the trust and support of colleagues to push me forward as my father had done in those very early years of my life.

Returning to University

Revisiting stories and experiences with the sole purpose of understanding my hope provided me with a much better sense of why I returned to the university landscape twice before finally attempting to implement teacher networking. Although, as my journal entries demonstrate in Notebook I – Coming to the Inquiry, I was at times hopeful and in the next moment questioning my hope as an educator, I knew I had to find a place where I could maintain what I considered a hopeful perspective. I must have realized there was more to having hope than giving hope to others when I decided to return to university each time.

> The virtual absence of meaningful professional dialogue in the school setting prompts many of the best teachers to return to the university year after year, frequently at their own expense. . . . One reason that professionally aware teachers pursue learning is that they discover hope

> and strength through listening, telling, writing, and thinking about stories in the classroom. (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, pp.152-153)

Arriving at university in 1998 I felt I had finally found my place or home on the educational landscape. The university landscape offered me opportunities to be involved in listening, telling, writing, and thinking about stories. My hopes were raised when I heard stories from other places on the professional knowledge landscape. Although I was able to maintain a very hopeful outlook regarding the possibilities for implementing a competing professional knowledge story in the beginning, I found at the end, that my hope was diminishing. Despair was winning out even though I continued to have a place on the university landscape to build and dream new possibilities. Understanding how I managed to remain hopeful for 18 years, even though there were many moments of despair, helped me feel there was hope to create opportunities for dialogue. My journal entries also continued to assist me in my move into the future while examining the past and present moments of hope and despair. I decided to read Greene's (1995) work again after the "Hope and the Helping Relationship" class. Like rereading my journal entries, I wondered if I missed something the first time around in Greene's (1995) work that would help me to understand more about my hope. It still felt like I was skimming the surface when it came to understanding my hope in relation to my role as an educator. That is when I came upon the following quote:

> The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled (Berger, 1984, p. 7) . . . For John Berger, if we were to learn more about using the language of images, we would be able "to define our experiences more precisely in areas where words are inadequate. . . (p. 103)

The significance of this quote might not have been realized had I not been thinking about the use of photography in the search for hope. Photography was not something I would have identified as an interest or tool from which to learn until I took the "Hope and the Helping Relationship" class. At the end of the class I wrote the following in a final reflection piece.

This paper has been an initial exploration. I am interested in exploring, in more depth, my experiences of hopefulness on the professional knowledge landscape in relation to my personal practical knowledge through Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative approach using journal entries, stories, photographs, and reflections (Journal Entry, June 6, 1999).

My journey was taking another turn. This notebook was coming to an end. I was anxious to begin using photographs as field texts to help me understand more about my hope in relation to my experiences, especially over the past two years. I enrolled in an Independent Study with Dr. Jevne entitled "Discovering my Hope as an Educator Through Photography."

Notebook IV – Understanding My Hope Through the Photographic Experience

I kept repeating the instructions to myself, "Just take photographs of whatever catches your eye." After spending the last hour locating my camera, I was not sure anything would actually catch my eye. It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon. The sun was shining wildly through the trees. The first snowfall of the year had fallen during the night and my tracks appeared to be the first of the day although it was already two o'clock in the afternoon. I could hear my favourite sound of all, the snow crunching beneath my feet. How ever could I capture the sound and sun shining so radiantly at the same time? It felt very strange indeed to have a camera strapped around my neck(Remembered Story, October 2,1999.

Looking back to that day, I remember my thoughts about wasting a whole roll of film. It felt like such a frivolous activity. I regularly walked the path I chose to start my assignment for the "Discovering My Hope as an Educator" class. As I continued my walk on that day I started noticing things I had not paid attention to on the many walks before. I remember the excitement when I arrived home from the walk. I wanted to take a photograph of the loaf of homemade bread my husband had made, which was sitting next to the jam made by my mother. All of a sudden I did not have enough film left!

Having the film developed brought more frustration. The photographs were so plain. I was disappointed, but I had a project to complete, so I went out and took more photographs. I did not set aside a whole afternoon. I decided if the photographs were going to be ordinary, I could take them at ordinary times. I did not need to create a special time for photography. Sometimes I would be intrigued by an idea, but for the most part, I continued with what became just another assignment that needed to be completed.

More Surprises on the Educational Landscape

Meanwhile, I had just entered a new school year. It felt like I had only skimmed the surface in coming to understand my hope during the three-week summer course. I created new questions about my hope. I needed to know more about my hope in relation to my overwhelming desire to make teacher networking a possibility. I also needed to see if I would survive on the landscape where teacher networking was barely mentioned toward the end of the second year of its implementation.

Before I knew it, there was a joint planning session for the third Area Three professional development day. I was sitting in the library of my own school with teachers from 16 different schools. Since the area boundaries changed over the summer some of the original schools from the first year were no longer a part of Area Three. Other new schools were now part of our area. I decided to be quiet, something I do every once in awhile. I wondered if teacher networking really was a thing of the past or was I being overly sensitive given the difficulties I encountered over the last two years?

Our third joint professional development day between Area Three schools; I can hardly believe it is the third one already. When it came time to discuss who the keynote speaker should be, one of the principals suggested someone who could talk about the importance of teacher networking from the university setting, in other words, another expert. Dead silence for what seemed like a minute transpired before two teachers, *almost simultaneously, began to speak. The first teacher replied emphatically, "We do not need someone from the university to tell us how to talk to each other. Just let us talk like we have been over the past year." Even more rewarding was the comment sliding in from the second teacher, "I would like to have the hour to network, instead of listening to how we should be networking."*

I could not believe my ears. These words were coming from other classroom teachers in a room half full of principals. I did not have to say anything. I am no longer the lone voice crying out for opportunities to create public known spaces for honouring personal practical knowledge. I was elated that as a result of the comments from the two teachers that all Area Three teachers would have an opportunity to experience teacher networking for a second time as a part of a regular professional development day during the joint Professional Development day in November. Perhaps more teachers would feel compelled to participate on an early Thursday dismissal day in February after the joint professional development day. I could only hope (Journal Entry, September 15, 1999).

This was the first time I heard teachers speak out against the sacred story before I formally exited the school landscape. I remember thinking how brave those two teachers were. I also remember thinking that I had succeeded on some level. Other teachers would now advocate for opportunities to dialogue to build personal practical knowledge. It did not matter that those two teachers were two out of approximately 160 teachers in Area Three. It was one thing to have teachers participating in teacher networking, but having other teachers advocate for teacher networking felt like a much larger accomplishment.

I continued to take a low profile for the remainder of the fall before the joint professional development day. My classroom, my photographic assignment, and another university course helped divert some of my attention away from teacher networking. I succeeded in making myself very busy once again. But when I think back to that year I realize part of my success in remaining detached from teacher networking can be attributed to having an intern half time. We attended the in-services and professional development sessions held throughout the year, but it was the knowledge we created, together with our students within the in-classroom-place, that I remember the most. It reminded me of the moments I shared with my mom. I must have realized this was the best I could hope for, given the outcome of the past two years.

The teacher networking session dates were scheduled for three times over the year. The first one would occur during the joint professional development day held in November. I was glad I could bring my intern to the session. I hoped we would juxtapose what we had been learning in our classroom with what other Grade 4 teachers in Area Three were experiencing. In addition, I hoped more teachers would experience what I, along with one tenth of the teachers involved in teacher networking over the last two years, had experienced. When the two teachers spoke in favour of an opportunity to network during the joint professional day, I too envisioned this as an opportunity to reintroduce teacher networking to all the teachers.

Searching in the Usual Places

During this last phase of my quest to understand why I needed to implement teacher networking as a form of professional development, I undertook the task of reading anything I could on the subject of hope and education. This was partly to meet the requirements of the class with Dr. Jevne, and partly to satisfy my own curiosity. I wondered if there was a connection to my work and my hope as an educator.

One of the first books I encountered was written by a psychologist who traveled from Los Angeles to Mexican-American border towns, from the South side of Chicago to rural Montana, and finally from Mississippi and Kentucky to Baltimore and New York to understand why public education was slowly being eroded. Ross (1995) completed his four year search with the book *Possible Lives: The Promise of Public Education in America.* He found that those teachers who were able to realize democratic goals for their students and selves developed formal and informal social arrangements. "These relationships and professional networks reinforced, at times revitalized, a belief held in some way by all the teachers I met: a belief in the value of their work, even if they voiced with clarity its limits and contradictions" (p. 422).

I am intrigued that I chose this book in the first place because I had to read well into the book to find the hopeful content. The words "possible lives" in the title must have caught my eye. While reading the book I was able to make the larger connection to hope which I later captured in my journal.

I am wondering, after reading this book if, in fact, being in community with others is what has kept me hopeful throughout my teaching career. I know I have often pondered why I have this burning desire to work with others in (conversation) dialogue to delve into the complex issues associated with teaching and learning. The greater question for me is why some of us value being in community and others appear safer in isolation, but burn out quicker due to the isolation (Journal Entry, September 20, 1999).

The book explained something similar to how my family interacted and did things together in community. I remember the Friday evening, when I was in high school, when we gathered to build a cheesecake using cottage cheese because my brother, Neil, wondered how it would work. Everyone had a job and together we built that cheesecake. It surprises me that I do not remember how the cheesecake tasted (being a lover of good food), but rather how it felt to be together to find an answer to Neil's question.

Another book by Kohl (1998) called *The Discipline of Hope: Learning from a Lifetime of Teaching* provided additional opportunities for pondering in my journal. Kohl wrote about his experiences participating in the communities that children lived in to create learning that was meaningful. Later in his career, he extended his work into teachers' lives. Kohl demonstrated what I felt it meant to be a teacher. Reading his story emphasized and validated my life as an educator. He, too, understood the need for community:

> Just about every attempt at school reform seems to try to fit the child to the system rather than help teachers, students, and communities build education that works for them. I believe that is why testing is so prevalent. Educational experts don't trust children, communities, and teachers enough to let them judge the effectiveness of education. School bureaucrats are afraid of children's voices, community control of schools, and critical scrutiny of their work so, for the sake of survival, they use tests, no matter how biased, to evaluate the results of specific efforts and remove the evaluation process from the people most directly affected by the programs. (pp. 51–52)

I worked hard at developing networks of support for teachers and teachers with parents within the community. I have been working toward having teachers develop dialogue in safe places to begin to trust our experiences and to develop voice to examine *and incorporate alternative possibilities in meaningful ways. I believe that some teachers have lost their enthusiasm for what they can accomplish as an educator because their expertise has been ignored (Journal Entry, November 5, 1999).*

Kohl was more courageous than I. He did not give up like I felt I was doing. On the other hand, I felt his frustration and, in doing so, I knew that my frustration would help me understand what I needed to do next. I needed to let my experiences inform my knowing, now more than ever. I could only hope his courage to push would help me remain committed to what I needed to do the same on the professional knowledge landscape. Like the life mentors I have been fortunate to have on different life landscapes, authors sustained my determination to fight for what I believed was necessary. I cannot count the number of times individuals have said to me, "Where do you find the time to do so much professional reading?" Professional reading is, in many ways, what sustained my determination to work for opportunities to network, but it also sustained my life on the educational landscape for as long as it did. I searched for models and encouragement in others' experiences.

Reading others' stories helped me begin to understand how my hope was tied to my need to be in dialogue with other teachers. But that knowing did not come until later in my quest when I was able to get beyond a personal cover story about being a teacher. That did not happen until I worked a long time with the photographs I began to take on that snowy October day. Before that knowing I had one more joint professional development day to live through.

One Last Chance

I was unprepared for how teacher networking proceeded on that joint professional development day. I was, at the last minute, asked to prepare a set of questions for the grade level groups. This request came from a principal. Although I had decided to take on a much lesser role, I was still seen as a facilitator by the principals. I had begun to question my judgment regarding how much structure was required for these sessions to be meaningful for teachers at this point. I created what I felt were more open-ended questions. The next story tells about my experiences with teacher networking on that day in November.

I found it very difficult to hear other participants during the teacher networking session because there were two other grade levels meeting in the same room and the table we sat around was too big to hear from one end to the other. How could I have let a principal plan the space for teacher networking? I kept looking over to the other end where teachers were engaged in separate conversations of their own. I felt sorry for the facilitator of the group and yet I could not say anything for two reasons. Firstly, I was a participant and secondly, I was the one who made the questions to facilitate the discussion. I was instructed by a principal to prepare generic questions for every group. I sensed teachers were going through the motions, answering each question in turn, only because they understood that was what they were supposed to do. For the

> most part, it felt like teachers were answering each question with their principals standing over their shoulders. The discussion was stifled. I wanted to leave and never return. This is not what I envisioned at all. The crowded conditions, generic questions, and mandatory participation were very different from what I experienced around the table at the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development. This experience in no way represents what I envisioned yet, as a member of the joint professional development planning committee, I helped create it. Why did I not demand the necessary conditions required to make this a successful and productive experience for teachers to honour their professional knowledge? Why did I settle for less (Remembered Story, September 1,1999)?

The joint professional development day certainly did not create the kind of space I envisioned. It was a huge disappointment. The first time we met as grade level groupings during the professional development day in 1997, each grade had a room, even though the time was rushed. This time we were two and sometimes three grades to a room, making it impossible to hear one another. The questions brought mixed reviews in the evaluations. I knew one thing for sure. We did not experience dialogue. The questions determined the discussion.

Although I was not surprised by the negative comments from the evaluation of the joint professional day, I found myself concentrating on the negative over the positive comments.

Evaluation Comments

- Networking groups too big!
- Could not hear. Need round tables for discussing.
- Networking session could be used for another networking session.
- Please leave us alone to actually network. Do not make work for us. We began sharing ideas, successes etc. amongst each other and then we were forced to answer questions and have them recorded on paper. Why?
- Networking needs more form and better venue. Too much interference from multiple discussion in one place.
- Networking session questions seemed rather contrived.
- More beneficial to discuss issues relevant to specific groups.
- The networking topic could have been more focused.
- It was hard to hear people speaking during the networking conferences.
- I enjoyed the opportunity to meet and share ideas and celebrate learning.
- The day agenda was well organized. We should have another Professional Development day like this next year.
- The networking session had groups that were too large to hear all the comments. What was the focus of the session? It did not seem to have any particular positive agenda outcome.
- Networking groups should have been smaller and in a circle.
- Networking room had too many groups making it difficult to hear.
- It would have been nice to have teachers sit in a circle and have a five-minute ice breaking activity before the discussion begins. The group behind us was so loud that it was meaningless to speak at our group. People could not hear us clearly.
- The subject specific sessions are more useful than networking.
- Realistic topics to discuss i.e. strategies, resources
- Need more rooms for networking.
- I enjoyed the networking session to meet with other kindergarten teachers
- The networking session could be improved by asking more questions. Our group finished within 30 minutes.
- Need to have teachers from different schools sitting together. Most conversations were between teachers from the same school.
- I enjoyed the networking, but I thought it was to discuss and exchange ideas, not to be negative towards everything and everyone.
- I found that it was a bit of a complaining session. I would rather walk away with 15 – 20 ideas that work rather than hear complaints for an hour.
- Networking in its true form would have been beneficial.
- I found networking to be unproductive.
- Way too much complaining, not enough solution based.

- We were off topic most of the time, but we talked about what concerned us.
- Disorganized.
- I really liked the opportunity to get together with others. Perhaps next time there could be a separate session for special needs.
- I was a student teacher attending this conference so I was not sure what to expect. I feel that the networking session was interesting for me, but it seemed to focus more on the negative, rather than on the positive aspects of teaching.
- Not enough structure. Who was running it?
- Networking needs to be curriculum focused. It was too general.
- Rather have a session instead of networking – or shorter time for networking. Not all teachers seem to be interested or committed to this concept.

I became less than enthused by the prospect of ever living the competing professional development story I worked so hard to create. We had only one more teacher networking session planned for the year. That was on February 18.

I am beginning to think I do not have the energy to create teacher networking opportunities anymore. I am not going to mention it again. In fact, I will recommend someone else represent our school on the joint professional development committee. All day I fielded calls from one school where the principal and teachers demanded detailed agendas for the session on February 18. Not one person showed up from that school. The numbers are not growing. There are only a few at each grade level who make the effort to attend and who tell me how much they need opportunities like teacher networking. Unfortunately, there are many others, like those from Greenwood School, who kept me on the phone before the session with comments like, "We need to know what we will be discussing before we commit our time. What will I be taking back to my class? What do I need to bring?" When I responded with, "Bring your experiential knowledge," they shut down. Their principal called my principal hoping to exert control over me! She was one of the original principals who agreed teacher networking was what was needed and now she, too, was trying to force naming a topic for discussion. Why can't we get together to *dialogue and support one another without a formal agenda that keeps everyone focused on achievement? The amount of time I spend trying to implement a competing story, opposed to a new sacred story, drains my energy from the classroom (Journal Entry, February 2, 2000).*

Only a small number of teachers participated in the sessions and although that concerned me at the time, I also knew I could not control the outcome. Teachers could not be mandated to attend the sessions. If they were it would have been another version of the sacred story. There were some teachers who would not attend if they were not using their time well and could not take something back into their classroom to use the next day. There were also those who wanted an agenda or topic to address, otherwise they would be wasting their time. I also heard from those who felt they did not have any knowledge or materials to share and so were reluctant to attend. It seemed I could not get across to those teachers that teacher networking was a time to share teacher stories with one another. I was saddened so many teachers chose not to honour their teacher knowledge by sharing teacher stories and wonders with one another. I had to continually remind myself that teacher networking was not mandatory and that we succeeded in bringing it to the joint professional development day.

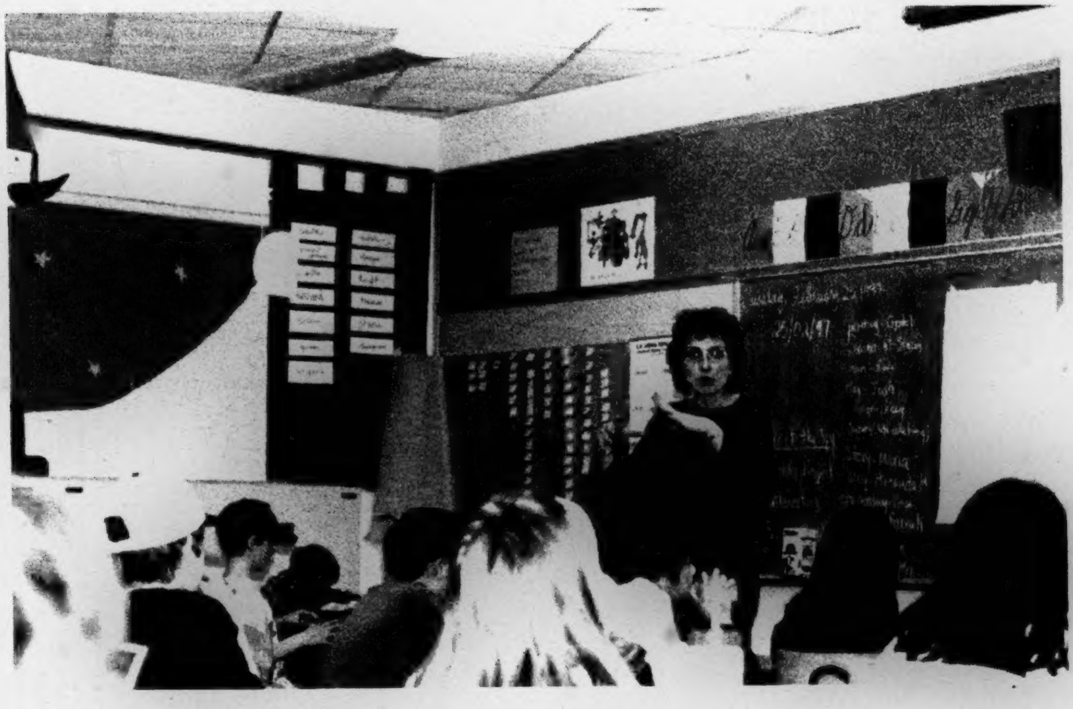
My energy was being depleted in the process. I did, however, have other places from which to live and create knowing. I had only begun to take photographs. I still had a lot of work to do around understanding the meaning in the process and outcome of my work with photography. Photography became the space in my life where I could lose myself.

Camera and Pen in Hand

Taking photographs has helped me slow down. Many of my photographs are now in the classroom. My hope has shifted from out there to in here--inside myself--in my most direct contacts with other individuals. I am more willing to be with people on more than a superficial level. I feel I can let people get to know the real me, not who I want to be. I do not have to make a huge difference out there. The difference I have to make is with me (Journal Entry, December 7, 1999).

I did not know, at the time of this journal entry, that I was becoming aware of my past attempts at covering up the real me. An increased knowing resulted in having a photograph to write around. There were aspects of the photograph I could not ignore. I could no longer fool myself into thinking I was feeling a certain way. This was the first time I recognized the difference I had to make was not "out there" so much as within. In many ways this was the first time I began to look at "my own hope" as opposed to the hope I could bring to others.

Not long after this I encountered, for the first time, my own hopelessness. I was not only shocked, but alarmed as well. It happened while writing around a photograph of myself standing in front of the classroom. The photograph had been taken only a few days before. What I find interesting is that this is the second photograph where I am shocked at my resignation in front of the class. Yet, I did not realize there were two photographs until I wrote this research text!



When I first looked at this photo, my immediate reaction was, "Oh my God! I have to rip this photograph into small bits." But then it hit me. This is who I am. I have become this timid looking, middle-aged female standing in front of a classroom full of students. The part that scares me the most is the set, resigned mouth. Have I become destined, like so many other educators I keep meeting, to put in my days until retirement?

This is not the educational system I once dreamed of. I remember carrying my books around the house in the brown paper bags. I remember the passion my mother felt, and still feels, about being a teacher. My passion comes and goes.

I would title this photo Despair!

The question this photo might ask of me is, "Why have you let this happen? How much longer will you stall?" (Journal Entry, March 11, 2000).

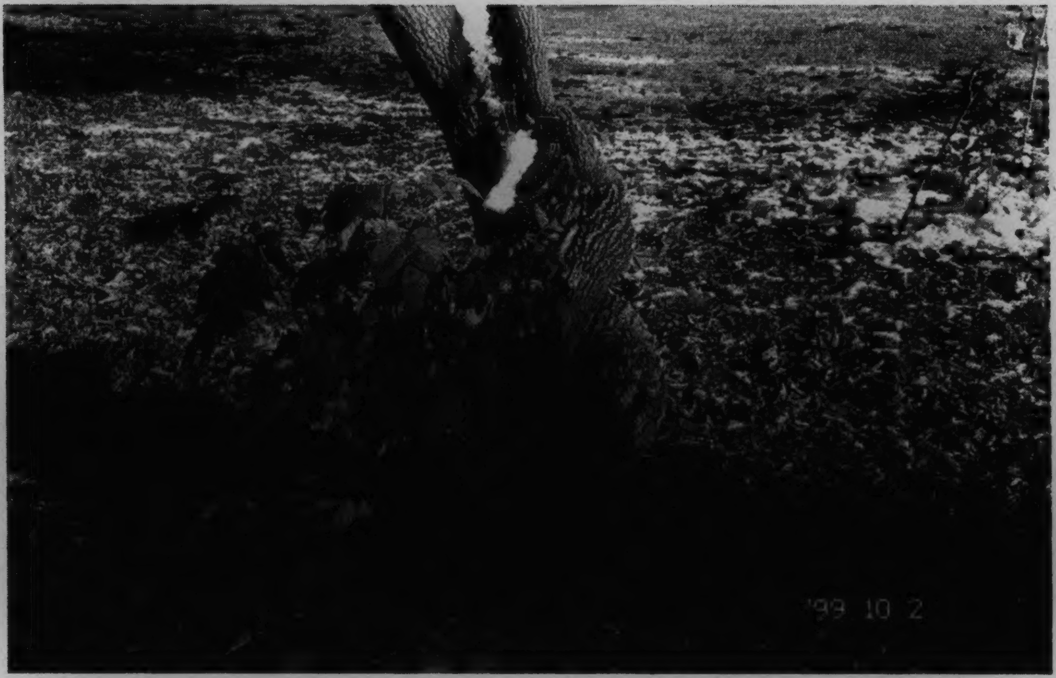
This journal entry continues to surprise me. I have to wonder if I had not delved into looking at my hope through photography would I have recognized my despair? This was, after all, the second photograph of its kind. I totally ignored the first photograph until I started to write this research text. Would I still be standing in front of a class of students with a resigned stance? Would I still be searching for something I could not articulate as I feel I am able to now? Those are all questions I cannot ignore. Yet, I know the outcome was very different. I have comfort in knowing I did recognize my despair.

Time Off the Landscape

Finally, spring break arrived. Somehow I knew I had to get away. I booked a flight to Vancouver to begin the process of writing around the photographs I had been collecting over the past four months. I needed a new space and place from which to reflect on my place on the landscape. I visited Dr. Jevne before leaving for Vancouver, after writing around the photograph titled "Despair," claiming my feelings of hopelessness. Her words of encouragement to write in and around the feelings of hopelessness to understand my hope more fully, assured me I would be quite all right living in that hopeless place for a while.

Leaving all behind, spending time sitting looking out onto English Bay, and then meeting up with two young colleagues in the evening, provided me the space to travel into the photographs. Walking through Stanley Park I was able to capture more photographs to write around and through when I returned home. Laying the photographs out on the small desk in my hotel room, choosing which one caught my eye first, and then beginning to write around the questions provided by Dr. Jevne was easier than I thought. I did not have any distractions and so could move into the photograph or stand above the photograph for as long as I chose.

I began to write my story of hope through photography. Each photograph became a chapter in itself.



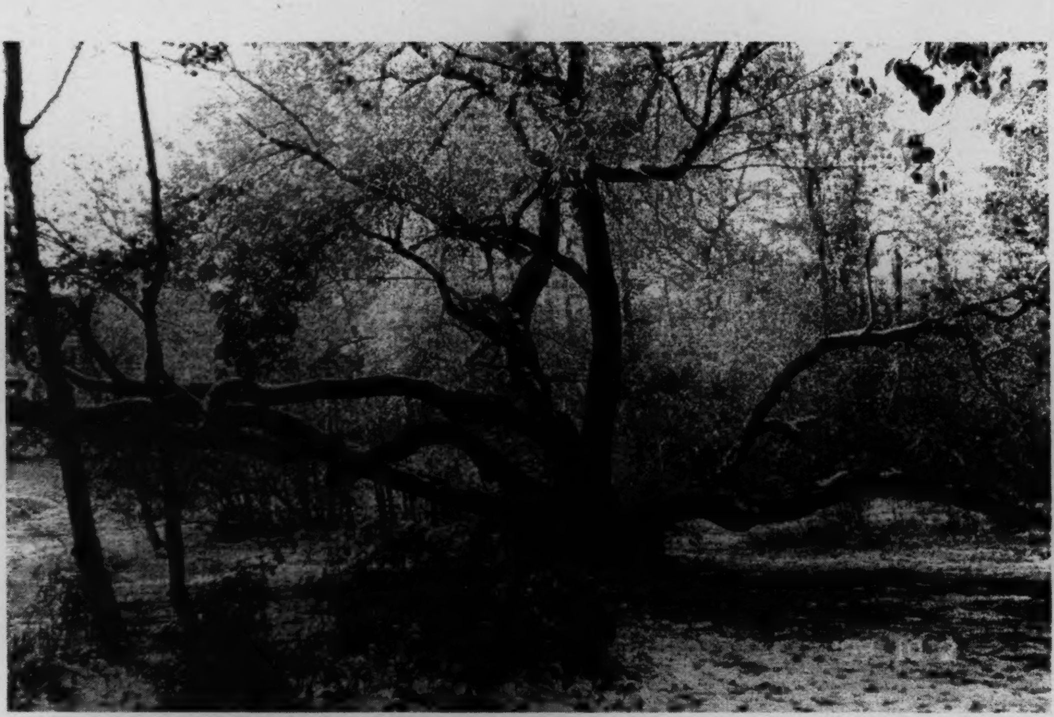
Dear Trunk,

I sit here because I have to begin to look at my hope, but I am afraid. I am afraid to really begin the process because I am quite certain that I am not very hopeful at the moment. I took your picture because I have to start somewhere. I am hopeful on the surface. If I were to strip away the layers like the layers of your bark, I am afraid I would find I am vulnerable to the hope that does not exist.

In a sense the bulk at your bottom feels like the bulk holding me back from moving onward. I feel like I am anchored to the ground much like you are. I have created so many ways to keep me anchored from moving on. The bulk at the base is also like the bulk of knowledge and experiences I have created. All familiar and safe; therefore like you, I do not have many other strong branches or passions. My life is my work or my work is my life.

The leaves or new growth are all the ideas I have, but like new growth, my ideas are all too soon cut down or stunted. I do not let my ideas take root. Instead I make the trunk fill more with excuses for why I cannot change things. So now for 20 years I have been in the same career. I certainly have made a difference in individual lives, but I feel like I am no longer growing as an individual. I have been anchored in one spot and could die in this one spot – not having experienced real growth. Instead my outer skin just continues to become thicker so I feel less and less. I am exhausted, but the few new shoots of ideas keep my going. They raise my hopes, but don't really develop into strong branches. I will be content to start with one.

Sending out a new shoot to later become a branch will, I suppose, take courage. The branch could be chopped down. I could loose it to disease. I will not know until I make the attempt to grow a branch or project, but ideally a new passion. Figuring out where that branch should grow, how far it should grow and how much energy I should devote to that branch will require my attention and devotion.



The photo is asking why I do not come and sit with it to understand better where my hope resides. The tree is pleading with me to spend some time with it so I can explore its many branches that are the basis of my hope. The tree says, "Come to me. I have the answers you are seeking. Some of these branches will seem familiar while others are new. Come to me where you can discover the branches unknown – the paths not taken – the unexplored ideas. I have ideas/possibilities you have never explored. Sometimes the sun shines through my branches providing a whole new understanding. But you have to be willing to sit for long periods of time. You also have to be willing to spend time with me many times, not just once hoping for all the answers. You will find that you will want to spend more quite time with me."

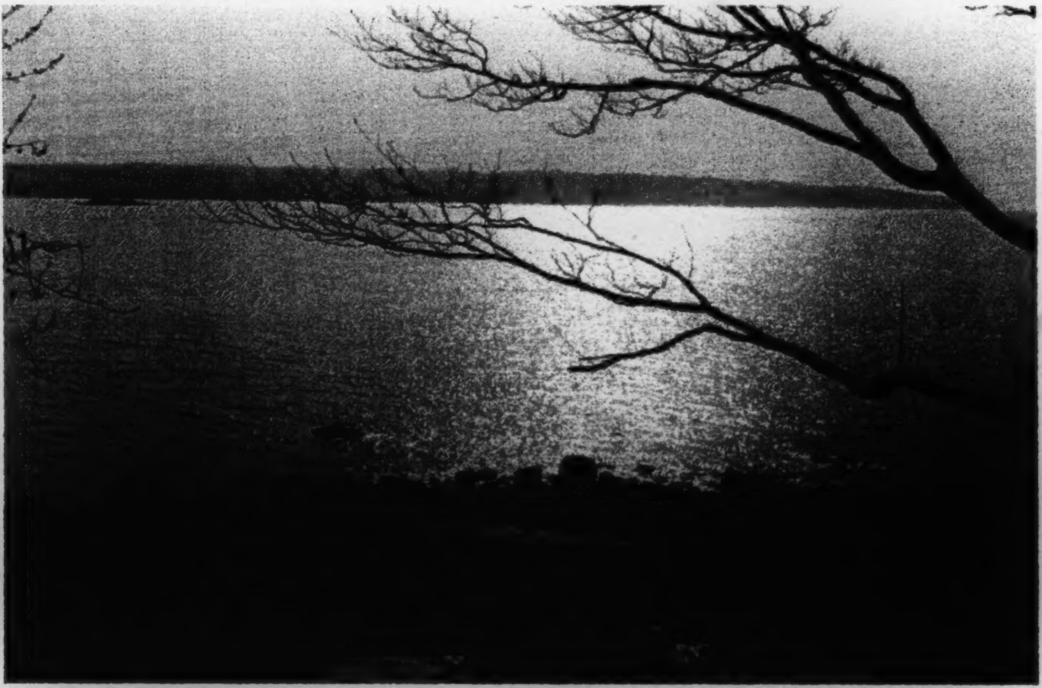
Cloud Nine

I feel like some days I am closer to reaching cloud nine than on other days. When the statement, "Get off cloud nine," was first made to me, I think I was in a state of shock for at least a week. I have a fascination with clouds that I did not realize until embarking on this photographic journey. As a child I would often lie under the clouds imagining a great many different shapes and scenes. I have continued that into my life today in some ways. It seems I am always trying to imagine a different or better way.

Before I left on this holiday, people told me all it does in the spring in Vancouver is rain. You cannot imagine my surprise at the beautiful blue sky and fluffy white clouds, so reminiscent of my childhood. It has been a long time since I connected clouds with my childhood dreams and easygoing days of taking things as they came. This is pretty much how this vacation is unfolding.

Looking at this photo I realize I am standing in a very shaded part of the beach. Once again, being alone has created space and time for me to get in touch with how I am feeling. I am in a shadowy area of my life looking out into the brightly shining sun. I know I can step over into the sunny part any time, but for now I am in the shade. The clouds hold a special significance. They hold the promise of everything I dream. I can live on cloud nine if I chose or I can live the life of complacency.

This photograph has convinced me that I do not have to check out with someone else whether it is okay to dream, or to make my dreams come alive. I know what is best for me. If the clouds are fluffy and inviting I want to be open to the possible shapes and scenes they present. Even when the clouds are not so inviting, I want to be able to take the time to feel what picture they are presenting to me because that is the picture that quite possibly will release the feeling from deep within. By not acknowledging the potential shapes and scenes, I am ignoring the many different feelings. No wonder I am exhausted so much of the time. This is the first time in a very long time that I have felt excited about having time to wander, rest, write, and read without having to do anything at all. I can sit and watch the picture show move across the sky if I choose. That is the best part!



Reaching Out

I love water, having grown up living in front of one of the largest lakes in Alberta. I swim every day, not for the exercise so much as for the calming effect swimming has on my being. Trees too, are very significant. I have found myself identifying with the many trees I have photographed for this project. The branches represent my reaching out for hope. The number of branches makes me hopeful. I have a number of opportunities from which to continue to build on my hope. I am reaching out to the tree in the left hand corner, much like I have to do when reaching out for support to sustain my hope.

By the end of the project, I was able to write about the hope enhancers in my life. Looking at my "hope shield" two years later, I understand that being aware of hope enhancers is the first step in discovering hope in one's personal and professional work. Knowing, also, how to bring hope to others is an important component of one's hope. Combining these two kinds of knowing about hope strengthens the sense of being able to participate in a good future.

Working with photography helped me understand the balance between hope and hopelessness. For a very long time I thought they were at opposite ends of a continuum. Now, two years after taking the "Hope and the Helping Relationship" class, I see hope and hopelessness as sitting side by side in close proximity in one's life as explained to Maneck in *A Fine Balance.* "You cannot draw lines and compartments, and refuse to budge beyond them. Sometimes you have to use your failures as stepping-stones to success. You have to maintain a fine balance between hope and despair" (Mistry, R., 1995, p. 268).

Although this understanding about hope and hopelessness would not come to me until I began to write this research text, the foundation for this understanding of a place between hope and despair occurred during the spring of 2000. Living from a place of hopelessness allowed me to experience the depths of despair I insulated myself from while on the educational landscape over the past 20 years.

Back to the Educational Landscape

I understood a little bit more about my hope as an educator returning from Vancouver and writing around and within the photographs I took while in Vancouver. I decided not to push for the last session of teacher networking. Instead, I envisioned places on the educational landscape where I could be hopeful. Being a hopeful role model, using what I learned about my own hope as an educator through photography and the places and individuals who instilled hope in my life, became my focus for the remainder of that year.

The process of photographing and writing provided new insights about my hopes as an educator. One might call this process a restorying of my life as an educator. Regardless of what it is called, I know I have given much more thought as to how important it is to make the big changes in the educational system. It was not about changing the system, but changing my lens or perspective to a more hopeful one. It was about searching for the little things that gave me the greatest hope in my work. I did not realize how much I enjoyed the "Book Club" I created that spring for Grades 4 to 6 students, until I started to look from the hopeful lens. An excerpt from my journal reflects how taking the time to enjoy the little things in my life triggered hopeful aspects from my childhood that I had forgotten to take the time to cultivate as an adult.

It took me a while to get this going, but it hit me today. This is the best thing since sliced bread, or better yet--freshly baked bread and homemade jam. It is not because I am running a "Book Club" to meet the expectations of the administration, but to see, feel, and hear the excitement, questioning, and wonderment being generated by the students. Sitting with the girls, hearing their chatter and enthusiasm, takes me back to when I was 10 years old, when I could say and do whatever I pleased without fear. The Book Club demonstrates my attempt at creating a similar place for the girls to be themselves. The Book Club encourages them to explore opportunities and possibilities I *almost forgot. I look forward to each Thursday when I can spend time on what really matters. The Book Club puts my life into perspective (Journal Entry, March 27, 2000).*

I began to realize it was not only my life, but also the lives of my students that I was constantly attempting to restory that sustained my hope as educator. When I greeted new students at the beginning of the year, I learned about them as individuals. Over the year, I sometimes reshaped the original stories they brought with them at the beginning of the year. I wanted my students to envision other possibilities for themselves. I think about the student Sylvia, who, at the beginning of the year, cried when I mentioned the word math. I knew her story well. It had been my story for much of my life. My story changed when I enrolled in an introductory programming computer course (back in the days when programming was important). Over that summer I realized I enjoyed manipulating the commands on the computer. I began to love the problem solving aspect and since then have seen myself as a competent problem solver. As a result my body no longer stiffens when confronted by a mathematical problem.

I knew it was my job to assist Sylvia in seeing herself as a more capable math student. Little by little, I found places where she began the process with the correct attitude and worked to a new place of understanding. Each time this happened I praised her efforts. By the end of the year, Sylvia not only put her head down to solve the math problems with determination, she asked me if I would start a Math Club just like the Book Club.

I came to realize that being hopeful is difficult work at times. It was, and is, not always easy to keep my hope up in the difficult situations. When I was a new teacher I was very hopeful for what I thought I might achieve in the name of education. I was charged with energy and enthusiasm at many levels, but over time that hopefulness had to be rejuvenated by looking in other directions, sometimes beyond and sometimes closer to myself. Each year brought new hopes and fears, but mostly renewed hopes for what I would be able to accomplish. I know from experience that I could not always maintain a sense of hopefulness without hard work. Fullan (1997) provided some of the necessary courage along the way because, as an educator, he too believed in making a difference through dialogue on the educational landscape. He speaks succinctly to what I have learned about my own hope as an educator. "Anger, sadness, frustration, anxiety, loss of control, dissatisfaction, discomfort – all inform hopefulness in the intelligent person" (p. 223).

Toward the end of that year, I returned full circle in believing teacher networking has the potential to create possibilities for empowering both students and teachers--in essence, encouraging hope for a good future. Although I have a much greater understanding of what that means, as I write this research text, two years later, I did discover the connection between teacher networking opportunities and hope at the end of that last year on the educational landscape. I ended that year quoting Snyder (1992):

> What is needed are environments where people living and working together can interact in a supportive atmosphere in which both individual and collective goals can be met. This would mean that people, in whatever setting they reside, could increasingly perceive that they have the agency and pathways to succeed. Our role as helpers, teachers, parents, and citizens is to help people to think in more hopeful ways, and to help them

> to build more hopeful environments for themselves and those around them. (p. 7)

Epilogue

Hope pushes me back into the deep recesses of my doubts and frustrations.
Yet, I push forward. (Journal Entry, February 2, 2000)

In the midst of writing my research text, I felt many dilemmas and tensions. Hollingsworth's (1994) brief history of her reflective frameworks helped me sustain my determination to pursue an alternative professional development story. "On my worst days, I wish that my life had been such that I would have been content to close my eyes to the struggle for urban literacy education. . . . As I came to know the full range of possibilities from remembering other times of risk and survival throughout my life I discovered the choices within these possibilities" (p. 219). As I wrote, I, too, realized new possibilities as I remembered past hope stories.

I wrote this autobiographical narrative inquiry to understand why I needed to implement teacher networking as an alternative professional development story. In the process of coming to understand why I needed to be in conversation with other educators on the professional knowledge landscape, I retold secret and cover stories. Hidden metaphors resonated (Conle, 1996) as I laid my stories, one beside the other and alongside other teachers' stories within the three-dimensional spaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Writing around photographs propelled me to look deeper still. Bringing those metaphors to the surface informed my hope as an educator needing to create meaning while in relationship.

This epilogue describes the narrative threads I discovered as I unpacked the metaphorical connections I deciphered as I wrote around and through the stories laid one beside the other. I am reminded of my original purpose in telling my story as I stated in the Prologue. "I want to tell the story as I was living it, not as I was supposed to be living it, so others too, can begin to express their hopes for an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of students and the world." At the end of telling my story, I hope other teachers are also inspired to reflect on what sustains their hope on the professional knowledge landscape.

Searching for Hope

It seems that as I progressed through the last 20 years of teaching, I had to constantly renew my hope by changing the focus. I had to find new ways of making a difference. I focused on individual students in my classroom, my classroom experience as a whole, and the educational system. This meant constantly questioning and reflecting.

It was not until I reread journal entries back into the early 80s after taking the "Hope and the Helping Relationship" class in 1999, that I noticed the searching behaviour was connected to my hope on the professional knowledge landscape. I was constantly looking for places and spaces where I could sustain the hope that drew me to become a teacher. In other words, I was searching for places and spaces where I could recreate the conversations I had with my early family and caregivers. In revisiting those moments I realized how often we shared our ideas for creating a future in which everyone was empowered to avail themselves to possibilities.

Even during the moments when I was the least hopeful I continued my search. I continued to read authors who found ways to be hopeful. I was looking for hopeful individuals to emulate on the professional knowledge landscape. I refused to give up. Writing around and through photographs forced me to go beneath the surface where hidden metaphors began to inform my identity as a teacher. My searching journey began by looking for why I needed to implement a competing professional development story. It ended with a search for other ways to maintain my hope on the educational landscape.

7 C's of Hope

As I moved back onto the school landscape after taking the "Hope and the Helping Relationship" course I became cognizant of the 7 C's of hope (Jevne & Nekolaichuk, 1999). Through reflecting on the 7 C's--community, communicating, coping, caring, committing, creating, and celebrating--additional C's began to inform my hope. The seven C's provided a foundation from which to understand my identity as a hopeful educator needing to be in dialogue with other educators. I realized I needed to make a commitment to be in a community of other educators communicating about my experiences next to their experiences. I was searching for support within caring relationships to cope with the difficult moments on the educational landscape. Like a group of Grade 5 students who said, "One needs courage to be hopeful," I felt how important it was to know support was available to move courageously toward an uncertain future. Finally, I began to realize that as teachers I did not feel we celebrated the successes we experienced on the educational landscape. I remembered the number of times I wanted to share discoveries and successes my students and I experienced, but was afraid to, for fear of being seen as bragging. The seven C's grounded my experience of hope in a way that provided the necessary security for me to feel comfortable to move inward to discover hidden metaphors.

Wearing a Mask

Maintaining my hopefulness meant having many discussions with those closest to me. That, too, was difficult at times. I often felt I should be doing what others thought was right for me. This became evident in conversation with two friends pursuing their doctoral degrees. They reiterated the same concerns I felt, regarding not feeling hopeful about returning to the school landscape. They, too, were worried about what others would think about them as teachers not wanting to be on the school landscape. It was around this same time that I remember different individuals saying to me, "What do you mean you don't want to be a teacher anymore? It is the perfect occupation for you. How can you say you want to give it all up when you've put your whole life into teaching?" I took their words seriously and worried about being an uncaring individual. I worked hard to maintain my passion for teaching and, through the process, discovered I was ignoring my hope as an educator.

I realized, toward the end of my last year on the school landscape as a teacher in a classroom setting, I had worn a mask for many years--a mask that conveyed the impression I was happy and fulfilled.

I wrote around a mask photograph just before the conclusion of the "Discovering my Hope as an Educator Through Photography" class. It was not until I heard a colleague speak at the table in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development about his upcoming experiences with photography that I realized the mask metaphor explained the cover story of my hope on the professional knowledge landscape.

Realizing I have been living a personal cover story was at first disconcerting. I kept asking myself how it was that I was living a cover story. Reading Crites (1979) helped me clarify the complexity of living a cover story for 20 years as an educator. His analysis puts cover stories into perspective. "If our analysis is correct, if self-deception is a permanent possibility implicit in the very dynamics of experience, it will follow that it is *a predicament we must learn to live with, without adding to our other illusions the assumption that there must be a definitive solution to it out there somehow" (p. 128). My cover story was that I was a hopeful educator because I was creating possibilities for my students, when in fact I was only exuding a hopeful educator image. I wanted desperately to be a hopeful educator, but regardless how hard I tried, I kept running into brick walls. Finally, when I truly began to reflect on what I needed to be a hopeful educator, I ran out of will (Snyder, 1994) to continue the deception. Deciding to take a leave of absence was a safe way to determine if I could find a way to live with the continuing deception. The kind of professional development I need to be hopeful appears far away. As I continue to listen to teacher stories off the landscape I realize I have to find other places to pursue my dream of being in dialogue to create possibilities for the future. Being open to glimmers of the real story makes me more aware of what is truly important to me. Perhaps too, I will allow myself to start enjoying the moments where I am truly content and passionate (Journal Entry, September 9, 2001).*

Realizing the cover story, or wearing a mask metaphor, was a part of my identity meant reconciling that part of myself with the teacher self I had previously envisioned. The energy I expended to pretend otherwise contributed to some of the exhaustion I experienced in both my personal and professional life. Instead of denying this aspect of my identity as a teacher, I could finally acknowledge it as a reality, leaving me with the necessary energy to discover what I needed to maintain my hope as an educator.

In addition, I realized the mask was my safety net when I could not live the teacher story I needed to live. I did not always wear the mask but, in some ways, I had a mask on all the time. There were times when I spoke out about what I thought I needed, but retreated quickly behind the mask when it seemed my teacher identity, and later my hope, was being challenged. Writing around the mask photograph helped me unlock the cover story I lived on the professional knowledge landscape. I realized I was hiding behind a mask of fear. The mask of fear made me afraid to speak out about what I needed on the professional knowledge landscape. I watched timidly from behind the mask of fear to ensure I was conforming to what was coming down the conduit.

> The mask takes on its own identity, talks for itself, and covers up the "real" person underneath it. Sometimes there are so many different masks available for use that we grow confused about which one to choose to put on. . . . Sometimes we cannot locate the key to unlock their hold on us and despair of ever being able to find our true self again. (Weiser, 1999, p. 120)

The mask protected me, but it also limited my experiences. I remember the sadness I felt when I realized I ignored my feelings of despair in my journals for 18 years. Writing to understand how I was able to go forward, with an assuredness that convinced both myself and others that I was a purveyor of hope while hiding behind the protective mask, revealed how I had become resilient, but not necessarily hopeful.

In resiliency theory there is an expectation that by enduring stresses or challenges, one evolves with a protective surrounding which, in turn, allows other stressors to continue with little impact. I believe a resilient individual may continue to live in a very stressful situation thinking the only option available is to endure the stressors. The photograph I titled "Despair," along with the following quote by Jevne and Miller (1999), describes the resilient behaviour I became accustomed to on the professional knowledge landscape.

> There are many people who struggle silently with hopelessness in the midst of busy and demanding schedules. Life for them has become a treadmill of obligations. It has lost its satisfaction. They feel trapped by circumstances and sense that their future will be an endless rut of meaningless activities. (p. 9)

This quote represents how I began to feel after 18 years on the educational landscape and yet others continued to comment how I was a model teacher! Somehow I managed to keep my inner struggle a secret. The photograph I entitled "Despair" and comments from colleagues like, *"There is nothing I can do about it. I might as well put up with the way things are. There is no use trying to make a difference because nothing changes. This is my lot in life until I retire"* (Notebook II, Living the Inquiry) made me realize I did not want to spend another ten years being resilient, but not necessarily hopeful on the professional knowledge landscape.

Rereading and writing around these comments eventually pushed me off the professional knowledge landscape to search for other places where I could be in a supportive community communicating with other educators toward a better future. As I continue to move into other places and spaces, at the end of this autobiographical narrative inquiry, these metaphors continue to inform my work with other educators who also want to be purveyors of hope.

This past month, a year and a half after collecting data for this research, I was sitting with a group of teachers talking about the importance of hope in our lives. A teacher, who sustained my hope throughout the writing of this research text in the possibilities we created together on his school landscape, told the group that his hope was to continue the dialogue we were having on that afternoon to create a stronger voice from which to speak about his experiences as an educator in the future. I remember thinking, "These were my thoughts when I began to implement a competing professional development story. I found others who are speaking the language I have been." Removing myself formally from the school landscape provided me with the opportunity to find others who also needed to dialogue to create choice and control in creating a better future. Hence, other C's have begun to inform my hope as I continue to lay my stories one beside the other and beside others' stories in different places and spaces on and off the educational landscape.

Caring in the Helping Relationship

A very significant metaphorical connection came alive in the Research Issues group one Tuesday afternoon toward the end of writing this research text. I was presenting my work to other graduate students sitting around the Research Issues table. It was just after I had reread my journals from the early 80s where, I realized, I had already begun to question my place on the professional knowledge landscape during my third year of teaching. Comments like, "*There is this attitude that we are there to stuff curriculum into students,"(February 21, 1982)* whirled around in my head as I attempted to articulate my need for teacher networking opportunities. As I reiterated to the group around the table how I ignored much of what was in my journal entries from so long ago, the discussion turned to one of self-care. I explained how my hope as an educator, before writing this research text, was to take care of others' hope. I did not wonder about my own hope or what I needed to be hopeful on the educational landscape. Other teachers around the table began to talk about how they saw their teacher identity tied to taking care of others as well. To do otherwise would appear selfish. Their stories resonated with stories from my past. “Reflective practitioners need narratives to connect with their childhood pasts, begin their professional journey, and practice their ethic of care. . . . Even when the story “belongs” to someone else, we can identify so strongly that it becomes intertwined with our own experience” (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, p. 51). I left the table feeling more confident that my hopefulness had to do with being self-full instead of viewing myself as selfish.

I also left the table wondering about the sacred story created around the caring metaphor. As I learned in the “Hope in the Helping Relationship” class, caring relationships and caring for oneself are crucial for sustaining hope. Noddings (1984) encouraged me to reflect on how caring relationships that honour one’s experiences creates trust to share the more despairing moments. The cared-for feeling we so desperately need to sustain hope is increased when our experiences are honoured. “The trust built up in the group and the depth of insight into one’s own life story will determine the degree to which meaningful narratives emerge and genuine responses are given” (Conle, 1996, p. 230). This is what I hoped would occur in teacher networking, but did not name until I told and retold my stories, alongside the stories I heard on the professional knowledge landscape.

It seems that my life on the professional knowledge landscape was one of caring for others while ignoring my own needs or trying to keep myself busy so I would not feel the lack of caring. Glimmers of change on the professional knowledge landscape propelled me forward to the point of exhaustion and frustration, many times. My memories return to enthusiasm when I first heard about collaboration during the strategic planning process, the day the principals granted me permission to initiate teacher networking, and reading about others on different places on the educational landscape, like Darling-Hammond (1998) who, too, saw the need for places to dialogue. My memories also return to frustration when I attempted to live out some of these initiatives. I lived two speeds while on the school landscape, full speed or stopped dead in my tracks from exhaustion. Writing around the photograph I entitled "Despair" in Notebook IV – Understanding My Hope Through the Photographic Experience unlocked this dichotomy. I had to ask myself how I had come to a place of not knowing the person standing at the front of the classroom in the photograph.

As I look back to the stories that I had to care for others while ignoring my own needs, I believe there were stronger forces at work. Those stronger forces were a part of the sacred story of professional development. Creating supportive relationships through genuine dialogue was not part of the sacred story of professional development. Neither was caring for oneself. It is not surprising that I envisioned caring for myself as selfish. In addition, Noddings (1984) provided much to ponder in her analysis of what activities are and are not rewarded in society in relation to taking care of oneself. If one's work is not valued as productive, then taking time off to care for oneself is not valued either. I often found myself frustrated with the attitude that no one cares what happens to teachers as long as they are following the directives coming down the conduit. I wanted teacher networking opportunities to promote understanding and, eventually, feelings of empowerment to change the dichotomies that existed on the professional knowledge landscape. Instead, I learned to think differently about caring for my garden. I stopped thinking about spending time in my garden as work. I began to view it as a place to create and celebrate as I did with my new hobby, photography. I began to search for other places where I could create and celebrate life's mysteries to reacquaint myself with the person in the "Despair" photograph.

Voice Informs Hope

I began this autobiographical narrative inquiry remembering the importance of my voice in high school--"The sense of knowing I can move forward with a greater sense of who I am in relation to others as my own voice grows stronger and more succinct with increasing understanding" (Prologue). This sentence represents what I struggled so hard to accomplish for students and teachers in the 20 years I lived on the school landscape. Journal entries from my third year on the formal school landscape foretold what I wanted to accomplish with teacher networking--"*Helping them see how they can grow from that which they regard as detrimental to their well-being" (January 9, 1982). "Teachers cannot wait for the system to change. We must push for the kind of professional culture we need" (October 4, 1995).* In Notebook III – The Experience of Making Hope Visible, I discussed how I came to need to be in dialogue with others to make a difference in the future. The following excerpt from that notebook represents this development. "My earliest memories instilled a sense of what I label constructed knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986) created around the many dinner tables with my immediate and extended families. I learned how to be a teacher who wondered how to make a difference in relationship with others."

I realized the only way to change lives by envisioning a future I was willing to participate in was through being involved in dialogue with others who also imagined a future they could participate in fully. It was not so much that I expected to create a unified, single, all encompassing voice, but I hoped to create a strengthened individual teacher voice through teacher networking. In essence I was hoping teacher networking would encourage Noddings' (1991) sense of being in interpersonal relationships. "Interpersonal reasoners build each others' confidence and self-esteem, and they direct their effects toward strengthening the relation. A major aim of interpersonal reasoning is to identify a range of possible responses and to find a satisfactory mode of delivery for the response" (p. 162).

When I began to realize how difficult and nearly impossible it was becoming to implement teaching networking, I became frustrated. I felt confident in my knowing that being in dialogue would benefit teachers' personal practical knowledge when I received permission from the administrators. They made me believe I had introduced an important kind of professional development. Part of me envisioned teachers in dialogue as the sacred professional development story of the future. Instead, I learned the important story lay in my experiences and why I came to want to do this kind of work. Whether or not the story changed did not matter as much as my reactions and realizations about what was happening to me as I began to explore the narratives of my life on the professional knowledge landscape.

The increasing resistance, in its many forms, played out repeatedly in the name of the sacred story, made me feel increasingly marginalized. I was losing my once strong voice that encouraged me to introduce teacher networking. Not only was I losing confidence, I was beginning to feel fragmented. I was no longer comfortable, but did not know what I needed to make myself comfortable. I realized I had to exit the professional knowledge landscape if I was to maintain my teacher identity. I felt like a student in Anita Plath Helle's (1991) class:

> You can think you have gained a voice in the sense of mastery of a discipline and a semblance of authority, and then you can turn around and find that you have also lost a voice, in the sense of being disconnected from yourself. (p. 53)

I knew I had to make a concerted effort to uncover what I was hopeful for and why I had become an educator if I was to reconnect with that teacher standing in the photograph "Despair." I realized before I could expect to have dialogue with other educators, I needed to understand why being in dialogue with other educators was so important to my identity as a teacher.

It was not until I embarked on the process of searching and writing around photographs that I began to understand how my own hope was about looking forward to a future in which I could willingly participate. I began to discover strategies I needed in the present, to sustain my hope into the future. One of the strategies was being in supportive relationships where I felt I could use my voice without repercussions, to create a good future. Traditional professional development, which is attending to the experts' and stakeholders' voice, stifled my teacher voice on the existing professional landscape. I did not feel I had a voice from which to speak about what was necessary for a good future for my students; therefore, my hope was being challenged. I was not developing an identity that honoured my knowing from my experiences as a teacher.

I gained the necessary strength to push forward by reading articles and books on the importance of connecting with other teachers and reflecting on personal and professional experiences, as I had done so many times in the past. In the process, I realized I could no longer remain on the educational landscape without compromising my personal and professional well-being. I knew I would not survive on a professional knowledge landscape that did not include dialogue as a way of informing my personal practical knowledge.

Small Changes

Perhaps I was unrealistic in my expectations when I was implementing teacher networking. I have learned that to have hope one must learn to make changes one brick at a time. Looking back to my experiences over the last four years, I am much more willing to live with the small changes that occur personally and professionally. I have learned to relish the small changes along the way, enjoying the journey more than the destination. Expecting teacher networking to become a major professional development story in two years was more than unrealistic. Now when I am working toward a more hopeful outcome, I ask, "What is the smallest thing I can do to move toward our vision or goal?" Living fully in the moment capitalizing on the past while moving forward means I do not expect to move mountains over night.

Constructing Meaning Creates Hope

The sun filters through the budding trees on this warm, cheery Monday morning. Seven of us meet every Monday morning to unpack our individual and collective experiences. Today is no different. Sometimes we share writing. Most often, we tell stories about our experiences.

We are coming near the end when Sharon asks, "What do you think the relationship between meaning and hope is?" Wendy suggests meaning develops in the present moment from experiences in the past. I reflect back to how crucial meaning was for my teacher identity. I wonder aloud, "How does that connect with what I strove so hard to create for my students' futures and subsequently my own future on the educational landscape?" I remember a journal entry that started with "*Meaning, meaning, meaning*" (May 30,1999). The answer slowly surfaces as Christy speculates what she is coming to know about meaning and hope. "Perhaps through the construction of meaning our hope is informed." It is only as I am packing my belongings to move back to my desk at the end of the two hour long conversation that I remember Freire's and Frankl's work simultaneously (Remembered Story, May 12, 2002).

As I reread Freire (1970) I could not help but see the parallels between how he describes the oppressed and how I described teachers living their part in the sacred story of professional development. The traditional professional development story corresponds to Freire's banking concept of education. Problem-posing education, as I understand it, corresponds to the teacher networking I envisioned wherein personal practical knowledge informs decisions being made on the professional knowledge landscape.

Frankl (1959) describes how important meaning making in the present pulled me into the future. "If the meaning that is waiting to be fulfilled by man were really nothing but a mere expression of self, or no more than a projection of his wishful thinking, it would immediately lose its demanding and challenging character; it could no longer call man forth or summon him" (p. 156).

Quoting Simmons (1998), in the article "Aging and Meaning in Life: Examining the Concept," Moore, Metcalf, and Schow (2000) provide a definition for meaning that connects to what I needed to inform my personal practical knowledge on the professional knowledge landscape. "Meaning is a common human quest for a map, known or felt, that guides decisions and action, that gives coherence to life, that weaves past, present, and future together in continuity, that shapes patterns of behaviour in relation to the common and uncommon challenges in life" (p. 28).

In other words, one's past provides meaning in the present, through thoughtful analysis about what the experiences from the past mean in relation to what one is doing in the present. It is not so much in knowing, but in knowing what to do in constructing meaning in the present, that one is able to create possibilities from which to choose in the future. Meaning in the present influences one's hope in looking forward with anticipation to participating in the future.

I needed to create, with other teachers, an individual and collective map in order to feel I was living a purposeful and meaningful existence on the professional knowledge landscape in order to decide how I would participate in the next moment. I needed to be engaged in praxis (Freire, 1970). That is, in reflection and action with others in creating multiple realities (Greene, 1995) from which to choose in the future.

We all have a part in choosing our destiny. We have a part in that destiny in the way we respond to the experiences we each have. Seeing each experience as containing the past, present, and future creates a sense of having a responsibility for one's actions. When I look back over my life on the educational landscape, I realize I was not always aware of the role I had played in creating my destiny. It has only been since I began this journey into my identity in relation to my hopefulness, that I am more aware of how I am responsible for creating meaning in the present with both the past and future embedded within.

Past Hopes Inform Present and Future Hopes

As I moved toward the second half of my research text, I began to think about the power of narrative inquiry in coming to understand why I needed to honour my personal practical knowledge to sustain my hope as an educator. The moments of intrigue continue to amaze me as I come to the end of this research puzzle. I hesitate to say the end, as I know my story will continue well into the future as I retell, relive, and rewrite my stories alongside other teacher stories.

The relationship between narrative inquiry, my need to find a place and space on the professional knowledge landscape to develop and sustain my personal practical knowledge, and my hope as an educator represents a metaphorical connection that deserves special unpacking at the end of this epilogue.

I do not think it was a coincidence that I chose to write an autobiographical narrative inquiry to find out why I needed to be on a professional knowledge landscape that honoured my personal practical knowledge. When I think about how my teacher identity developed from the age of five on, I know I learned from sharing experiences with my family and others who wanted to dialogue, that I needed to construct my way of knowing by juxtaposing my experiences alongside others' experiences. The process of narrative inquiry was an extension of what I had learned to do, to be the teacher I needed to be.

Secondly, as I was searching for ways to sustain my hope, unknown to me until I engaged in the photographic experience, past hopes informed present and future hopes. As I wrote to understand and continued to tell stories on the safe places on the professional knowledge landscape, my personal practical knowledge informed my experience of hope. Coming to know the part I played in sustaining the story of my hope continually challenged me and eventually helped me locate stories from my past where I had been more hopeful. "Existential philosopher Gabriel Marcel described hope as a means of remembering how we have been successful in the past so that we can use this as a source of hope for the future" (Snyder, 1997, p. 24). The most hopeful times on the professional knowledge landscape were times I was in relationship telling stories of experience.

Finally, in reliving and retelling past stories, I strove to create a different future on the professional knowledge landscape where I could create, with others, new possibilities and ways of being. During the few times when I was in relationship and able to honour the collective personal practical knowledge, I felt my voice, along with other voices, was strong enough to discover multiple realities (Greene, 1995). Retreating to the solitude of my journal helped to strengthen my internal sense of my hope in creating possibilities for other teachers to join in dialogue, but journaling was not enough. I needed to balance my internal needs and desires with the reality of events in the external world. The external world exerted a tremendous amount of control in how I lived my teacher identity, for it was the sacred story on the professional knowledge landscape that ultimately challenged my hope. This autobiographical narrative inquiry demonstrated that in positioning myself differently on the professional knowledge landscape I was able to harmonize my internal and external world to create a meaningful and purposeful present from which to move into an uncertain future.

I now know this autobiographical narrative inquiry was only the beginning of implementing a competing professional development story on the professional knowledge landscape. As I continue to learn about ways to create hope on the educational landscape, one pebble at a time, quotes like the following one will continue to influence my quest for meaningful dialogue on the professional knowledge landscape.

> Hope is rooted in men's incompletion, from which they move out in constant search – a search which can be carried out only in communion with other men. . . . As the encounter of men seeking to be more fully human, dialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness. If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounter will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious. (Freire, 1970, p. 80)

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